



OLIVER GOLDSMITH

*From Joseph Marchi's mezzotint of 1770 after the portrait  
by Sir Joshua Reynolds*

12

# ESSAYS ON GOLDSMITH

BY

T.B.,  
W., SCOTT, MACAULAY

AND

W., THACKERAY

AND SELECTIONS FROM HIS WRITINGS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION . . . . .	v
SCOTT'S LIFE OF GOLDSMITH . . . . .	1
MACAULAY'S LIFE OF GOLDSMITH . . . . .	20
THACKERAY'S GOLDSMITH . . . . .	38

## SELECTIONS

THE TRAVELLER; OR, A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY . . . . .	62
THE DESERTED VILLAGE . . . . .	76
RETALIATION . . . . .	90
A REVERIE . . . . .	95
LETTERS OF A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD :	
Letter IV. English Pride—Liberty—An instance of both— Newspapers—Politeness . . . . .	102
Letter XIII. A Visit to Westminster Abbey . . . . .	106
Letter XXI. The Chinese goes to see a Play . . . . .	112
Letter XXVI. The Character of the Man in Black, with some instances of his inconsistent conduct . . . . .	117
Letter XXVII. The History of the Man in Black . . . . .	121
Letter XXIX. A Description of a Club of Authors . . . . .	128
Letter XXX. The Proceedings of the Club of Authors . . . . .	131
Letter LI. A Bookseller's Visit to the Chinese . . . . .	138
Letter LIV. The Character of an Important Trifler [Beau Tibbs] . . . . .	142
Letter LXVII. The Folly of attempting to learn Wisdom by being recluse . . . . .	145
Letter LXIX. The Fear of Mad Dogs ridiculed . . . . .	148
Letter LXXI. The Shabby Beau, the Man in Black, the Chinese Philosopher, &c., at Vauxhall . . . . .	153
Letter LXXIII. Life endeared by Age . . . . .	158
Letter LXXXIV. The Anecdotes of several Poets, who lived and died in circumstances of wretchedness . . . . .	161
Letter CXXIII. The Conclusion . . . . .	165
EDITOR'S NOTES . . . . .	169





## INTRODUCTION

It would be difficult to find two distinguished fellowcraftsmen with less in common than Goldsmith and Macaulay. Both poured forth critical and literary essays, both wrote a *History of England*, both were noted masters of style in an age of great writers. It is but natural to look for some affinity between them, some bond of sympathy which should enable the later of the two to interpret the work of the earlier with peculiar insight. But Macaulay, whose lofty and serene character well fits him to be the critic of Addison, is too exalted to sympathize with the gentle, whimsical, incorrigible Citizen of the World. Bred himself in the narrow sectarianism of Clapham, a hymn-writer of promise at the age of five, he views with cold disapproval the escapades of Oliver's youth. The inimitable story of the 'ball' given by the impecunious sizar in the College attic is to him merely a sad instance of 'a life divided between squalid distress and squalid dissipation', and the scarlet breeches—'clothes' Macaulay modestly calls them—which saved Goldsmith from becoming a parson, and have proved the delight of succeeding generations, evidently shocked him no less than the Bishop of Elphin. The truth is that with all his real greatness Macaulay was not entirely free from what Goldsmith calls 'a disgusting solemnity of manner'. He can be witty on occasion, but more often he views humour as a suitable weapon wherewith to castigate an opponent. In his essay on the *Comic Dramatists*



*of the Restoration* he gravely demolishes Lamb's characteristic contention that the personages of Restoration comedy cannot be considered immoral because none of them bear any relation to real life. Macaulay is grieved to find so estimable a person as Mr. Charles Lamb giving utterance to so dangerous a doctrine, and, with genuine pain and from the highest motives, proceeds to break this particular butterfly upon the wheel. Incidentally he has much to say that is wise and suggestive, but he is obviously totally incapable of understanding the type of mind which finds delight in a bull or a paradox. That Goldsmith 'in defiance of the evidence of his own senses' should have 'maintained obstinately and even angrily, that he chewed his dinner by moving his upper jaw' is to him a regrettable example of the strange blunders into which ignorance leads an otherwise intelligent man, and he takes Beauclerk's friendly gibe—'Pray, dear Doctor, prescribe only for your enemies'—as proof positive that his friends distrusted his medical skill. It is highly probable that they did, and with excellent reason, but the anecdote in question is too typical an instance of eighteenth-century wit to count as evidence one way or the other. In short, while Macaulay tells us that Goldsmith was loved by such men as Burke and Reynolds, he leaves us to wonder how one so 'vain, sensual, frivolous, profuse, improvident'—and we may add, ignorant, envious, and uncouth—won the warm affection of the ablest and noblest-minded men of the day. It never seems to cross his mind that the witty Irishman may have been at least as conscious of the humour of his own bulls as were those who laughed at them, or that to a man of Goldsmith's whimsical disposition Boswell must often have seemed fair game. When Goldsmith struts off to take tea with Miss Williams



he is fully conscious of the envious glances thrown after him, and the strut is deliberate.

Thackeray, on the other hand, whom the calm virtue of Addison irritates into injustice, finds in Goldsmith a subject made to his hand. Saints stimulate him to become devil's advocate, but sinners—whose sins have no taint of meanness or cruelty—can often find a soft corner in the satirist's heart.

For Goldsmith he has an almost protective tenderness. And, as in all his lectures, Thackeray succeeds, just where Macaulay fails, in giving a vivid impression of personality. All the elusive charm and delicacy of Goldsmith blossom afresh in Thackeray's pages. Macaulay's essay on Goldsmith is an interesting and instructive descriptive catalogue: we half expect to find the author neatly numbered and exposed in a glass case. There is no escape from the fact that he is dead: he is honoured with a cenotaph in Westminster Abbey, and the jaws of his tomb are ponderous and marble. Thackeray sees the poor women sit weeping on the stairs at the news of his death, and makes us conscious of the hush behind that black oak door. As we read, our minds are full, not of a critical essay on a famous man of letters, but of a friend whose very weaknesses endear him to us. Macaulay's comment on sweet Auburn is that it is made up of incongruous parts, and is probably a mixture of a hamlet in Kent and an ejection in Munster. 'By joining the two he has produced something which never was and never will be seen in any part of the world'—a criticism which recalls Mrs. Barbauld's famous objection to the *Ancient Mariner*: 'It is improbable and it has no moral.' Thackeray quotes the pathetic lines,

Here as I take my solitary rounds . . .



and sees in them the revelation of a simple, honest, lovable personality: 'his pleasant little vanity, and desire that his village should admire him; his simple scheme of good in which everybody was to be happy.' He feels towards him much as he does towards the boy Steele, 'one of the most generous, good-for-nothing, amiable little creatures that ever conjugated the verb *tupto*, I beat, *tuptomai*, I am whipped.' Macaulay ignores the whole exquisite story of the Jessamy Bride; Thackeray in a paragraph draws a picture of that charming, merry household where Goldsmith was ever a welcome guest, where he was teased, petted, admired, and laughed at to his heart's desire. 'A lock of his hair was taken from his coffin and given to the Jessamy Bride.' The novelist-critic thinks nothing of giving two pages of a brief essay to a trifling anecdote in illustration of Goldsmith's love of children. Of actual literary criticism the essay contains almost nothing—Thackeray is far too biased, and far too interested in character apart from art, to make a critic—but it fulfils at least two of the functions of criticism, it fills the reader with a desire to go back and study the original for himself, and it creates a sympathetic atmosphere in which the study may be carried on; it helps us, in short, to look at Goldsmith's works not from our point of view but from his.

The charm of Macaulay lies in a character of unusual sweetness and strength. He himself met the unromantic difficulties of a somewhat hard life with unflagging cheerfulness and energy. It is but natural that he should be impatient of the weakness which made Goldsmith constantly dependent on others for assistance. He misunderstands Goldsmith as he misunderstands Boswell, in whom he can see nothing better than 'a common spy, a common tatler';



but in both cases the error is that of a strong and keen judgement. Macaulay lacks the novelist's power of sympathizing with a point of view which could never be his own: he is the dictator who lays down laws in literature and in morals, but his mistakes never spring from carelessness or pettiness, they are the defects of his qualities. Thackeray can blunder as badly as Macaulay, and where his sympathies fail, as in dealing with Swift, writes with a bitterness wholly alien to Macaulay's calmer and more judicial temperament. Once only, in the essay on Robert Montgomery, is Macaulay betrayed into unfairness—and there it is a generous indignation at puffing, which overmasters him. Thackeray's attempt to be fair to Addison is even less successful than Macaulay's attempt to be fair to Goldsmith. He is quicker, more impulsive, more emotional than Macaulay, and the simplicity of his English appeals to the taste of an age which finds Macaulay's prose ponderous; but his *British Humourists* is a portrait gallery rather than a serious contribution to literary criticism, whereas Macaulay's essays contain much of permanent critical value.

Scott's essay is somewhat perfunctory: he himself was unluckily compelled to do much of the literary hack work which he deplores in Goldsmith's case. Fortunately we have not to regret in this instance that 'such an author should have written so little from the stores of his own genius', but pot-boiling is at best a dreary occupation, and it is impossible not to hear the simmer of the pot in Scott's *Lives of the Novelists*. Since the cook is no other than the Wizard of the North, however, it is only to be expected that he should include at least some ingredients of admirable flavour, and from time to time a flash of humour or insight



lights up the page. A brother poet recalls with a chuckle how Goldsmith insisted on returning the £100 paid him for the *Deserted Village* 'when, upon computation, he found that it came to nearly a crown for every couplet, a sum which he conceived no poem could be worth': and there is a delightful picture of Oliver setting out on his travels 'with one shirt in his pocket, and a devout reliance on Providence'. It is as a novelist that Scott is considering Goldsmith, and obviously he was bound to give the chief place among his works to the *Vicar of Wakefield*, yet we cannot but regret that he found no space in which to discuss the humour and tenderness of the *Citizen of the World*. He tells us curtly that it consists of 'letters supposed to be written by a Chinese philosopher resident in England, in imitation of the *Lettres Persanes* of Montesquieu', and leaves us with the impression that there is no more to be said. Yet from the point of view of the novel these essays have a peculiar interest of their own. The ridiculous love story of the philosopher's son and the fair captive—who turns out to be none other than the niece of the Man in Black—melodramatic and absurd as it is, forms a thread of plot which cannot indeed be said to bind the essays together, but is interwoven with their fabric. The connexion between Beau Tibbs and his wife and the Man in Black and the sentimental novel of Sterne is obvious—Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim would at once feel at home in such company, notwithstanding Goldsmith's objection to such 'obscene and pert novels'; the flight of Hingpo and Zelis upon two of the swiftest coursers in the stables of Mostadad is no less obviously part of that current of romance which rigorous repression so often drives into strange eddies and backwaters in eighteenth-century literature. The age of common sense and observa-



tion, the age which regards zeal as 'pestilential', and describes the adventures of a pirate chief with the chilly accuracy of a police report, is also the age of *Persian Eclogues* and Eastern fables, of the *Castle of Otranto* and the Rowley forgeries. Goldsmith has little enough of the romanticist in him: the *Vicar of Wakefield* disregards opportunity after opportunity for melodrama, and in spite of our better judgement convinces us that the story is true because of the simplicity and homeliness of its sentiments. The essence of true melodrama consists in the realization by those concerned of their own picturesqueness; and the very fact that in his essay Goldsmith feels impelled to appeal to public taste by an absurd sham orientalism has an interest of its own. The eighteenth-century novel was developing on two distinct lines: the sentimentally realistic and the 'gothic'. Scott combined the two, and made mediaeval fortresses and queen's chambers as real (and nearly as homely) as country parsonages; without losing the glamour of romance, his genial humour prevented it from becoming stagey, and his natural vigour gave life and movement to the scenes of action in which he delighted. Hingpo and Zelis are pale and bloodless forerunners of Byron's heroes and heroines, without the genuine, if morbid, passion which makes these live. It is the more interesting to find them married under the auspices of Beau Tibbs and his wife, and to hear that, 'The Man in Black and the pawnbroker's widow were very sprightly and tender upon this occasion,' though unfortunately they fell out at dinner over the proper method of carving a turkey. The relation between the essay and the novel is nowhere more clearly marked than in the *Citizen of the World*, and Scott's discussion of such a point must necessarily have been a valuable contribution to literary criticism.



His closing remarks on the *Vicar of Wakefield* well sum up all that is best in Goldsmith. There is no need to apologize for the weakness or patronize the childishness of the man whose work succeeding generations read in youth and in age: 'We return to it again and again, and bless the memory of an author who contrives so well to reconcile us to human nature.' Nor is it only for his truth and kindliness that we value Goldsmith. In an age of coarseness and grossness of thought and speech his wreath is, as Scott says, unsullied. Without the didacticism of Johnson—if also without his force and virility—Goldsmith invariably turns our thoughts to images of tenderness and beauty. He has an innate purity and sweetness of mind which recalls Sidney or Herbert, and with all his keen wit and rollicking sense of fun he never utters a jest that wounds or delights in a doubtful situation. It was a friend who knew and loved him who wrote as his epitaph that he touched no branch of literature that he did not adorn, and swayed our emotions with equal gentleness and power. The author who deserved such a tribute may well receive our homage and our love—but scarcely our patronage.



## SCOTT'S LIFE OF GOLDSMITH

THE circumstances of Dr. Goldsmith's life, his early struggles with poverty and distress, the success of his brief and brilliant career after he had become distinguished as an author, are so well known, and have been so well told, that a short outline is all that need be attempted.

Oliver Goldsmith was born on the 29th November 1728, at Pallas (or rather Palice), in the parish of Forney, and county of Longford, in Ireland, where his father, the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, a minister of the Church of England, at that time resided. This worthy clergyman, whose virtues his celebrated son afterwards rendered immortal, in the character of the Village Preacher, had a family of seven children, for whom he was enabled to provide but very indifferently. He obtained ultimately a benefice in the county of Roscommon, but died early; for the careful researches of the Rev. John Graham of Lifford have found his widow *nigra veste senescens*, residing with her son Oliver in Ballymahon, so early as 1740. Among the shop accounts of a petty grocer of the place, Mrs. Goldsmith's name occurs frequently as a customer for trifling articles; on which occasions Master Noll appears to have been his mother's usual emissary. He was recollected, however, in the neighbourhood, by more poetical employments, as that of playing on the flute, and wandering in solitude on the shores, or among the islands of the river Inny, which is remarkably beautiful at Ballymahon.

Oliver early distinguished himself by the display of lively talents, and of that uncertainty of humour which is



so often attached to genius, as the slave in the chariot of the Roman triumph. An uncle by affinity, the Rev. Thomas Contarine, undertook the expense of affording to so promising a youth the advantages of a scholastic education. He was put to school at Edgeworth's Town, and, in June 1744, was sent to Dublin College as a sizar; a situation which subjected him to much discouragement and ill-usage, especially as he had the misfortune to fall under the charge of a brutal tutor.

On 15th June 1747 Goldsmith obtained his only 10 academical laurel, being an exhibition on the foundation of Erasmus Smythe, Esq. Some indiscreet frolic induced him soon afterwards to quit the university for a period; and he appears thus early to have commenced that sort of idle strolling life which has often great charms for youths of genius, because it frees them from every species of subjection, and leaves them full masters of their own time and their own thoughts, a liberty which they do not feel too dearly bought at the expense of fatigue, of hunger, and of all the other inconveniencies incidental to those who 20 travel without money. Those who can recollect journeys of this kind, with all the shifts, necessities, and petty adventures which attend them, will not wonder at the attractions which they had for such a youth as Goldsmith. Notwithstanding these erratic expeditions, he was admitted Bachelor of Arts in 1749.

Goldsmith's persevering friend, Mr. Contarine, seems to have recommended the direction of his nephew's studies to medicine, and, in the year 1752, he was settled at Edinburgh to pursue that science. Of his residence in Scotland 30 Goldsmith retained no favourable recollections. He was thoughtless, and he was cheated; he was poor, and he was nearly starved. Yet, in a very lively letter from Edinburgh, addressed to Robert Brianton of Ballymahon, he



closes a sarcastic description of the country and its inhabitants, with the good-humoured candour which made so distinguished a part of his character. 'An ugly and a poor man is society only for himself, and such society the world lets me enjoy in great abundance. Fortune has given you circumstances, and nature a power to look charming in the eyes of the fair. Nor do I envy, my dear Bob, such blessings, while I may sit down and laugh at the world, and at myself, the most ridiculous object  
10 in it.'

From Edinburgh our student passed to Leyden, but not without the diversities of an arrest for debt, a captivity of seven days at Newcastle, from having been found in company with some Scotchmen in the French service, and the no less unpleasing variety of a storm. At Leyden Goldsmith was peculiarly exposed to a temptation which he never, at any period of his life, could easily resist. The opportunities of gambling were frequent—he seldom declined them, and was at length stripped of every shilling.  
20 In this hopeless condition Goldsmith commenced his travels, with one shirt in his pocket, and a devout reliance on Providence. It is understood that in the narrative of George, eldest son of the Vicar of Wakefield, the author gave a sketch of the resources which enabled him, on foot and without money, to make the tour of Europe. Through Germany and Flanders he had recourse to his violin, in which he was tolerably skilled; and a lively tune usually procured him a lodging in some peasant's cottage for the evening. In Italy, where his music or skill was held in  
30 less esteem, he found hospitality by disputing at the monasteries, in the character of a travelling scholar, upon certain philosophical theses, which the learned inhabitants were obliged, by their foundation, to uphold against all impugners. Thus he obtained sometimes money, sometimes



lodgings. He must have had other resources to procure both, which he has not thought proper to intimate. The foreign universities afford similar facilities to poor scholars with those presented by the monasteries. Goldsmith resided at Padua for several months, and is said to have taken a degree at Louvain. Thus far is certain, that an account of the tour made by so good a judge of human nature, in circumstances so singular, would have made one of the most entertaining books in the world; and it is both wonder and pity that Goldsmith did not hit upon 10 a publication of his travels amongst the other literary resources in which his mind was fertile. He was not ignorant of the advantages which his mode of travelling had opened to him. 'Countries,' he says in his *Essay on Polite Literature in Europe*, 'wear very different appearances to travellers of different circumstances. A man who is whirled through Europe in his post-chaise, and the pilgrim who walks the great tour on foot, will form very different conclusions. *Haud inexpertus loquor.*' Perhaps he grew ashamed of the last admission, which he afterwards omitted. 20 Goldsmith spent about twelve months in these wanderings, and landed in England in the year 1746, after having perambulated France, Italy, and part of Germany.

Poverty was now before our author in all its bitterness. His Irish friends had long renounced or forgotten him; and the wretched post of usher to an academy, of which he has drawn so piteous a picture in George's account of himself, was his refuge from actual starving. Unquestionably, his description was founded on personal recollections, where he says: 'I was up early and late; I was browbeat 30 by the master; hated for my ugly face by the mistress; worried by the boys within; and never permitted to stir out to seek civility abroad.' This state of slavery he underwent at Peckham academy, and had such bitter recollection



thereof as to be offended at the slightest allusion to it. An acquaintance happening to use the proverbial phrase, 'Oh, that is all a holiday at Peckham,' Goldsmith reddened, and asked if he meant to affront him. From this miserable condition he escaped, with difficulty, to that of journeyman, or rather shop-porter, to a chemist in Fish Street Hill, in whose service he was recognized by Dr. Sleigh, his countryman and fellow-student at Edinburgh, who, to his eternal honour, relieved Oliver Goldsmith from this state of slavish  
10 degradation.

Under the auspices of his friend and countryman, Goldsmith commenced practice as a physician about the Bankside, and afterwards near the Temple ; and, although unsuccessful in procuring fees, had soon plenty of patients. It was now that he first thought of having recourse to that pen which afterwards afforded the public so much delight. He wrote, he laboured, he compiled ; he is described by one contemporary as wearing a rusty, full-trimmed black suit, the very livery of the Muses, with his  
20 pockets stuffed with papers and his head with projects ; gradually he forced himself and his talents into notice, and was at last enabled to write, in one letter to a friend, that he was too poor to be gazed at, but too rich to need assistance ; and to boast in another of the refined conversation which he was sometimes admitted to partake in.

He now circulated proposals for publishing, by subscription, his *Essay on Polite Literature in Europe*, the profits of which he destined to equipping himself for India, having obtained from the Company the appointment of physician  
30 to one of their factories on the coast of Coromandel. But to rise in literature was more his desire than to increase his fortune. 'I eagerly long,' he said, 'to embrace every opportunity to separate myself from the vulgar, as much in my circumstances as I am already in my sentiments. . . .



I find I want constitution and a strong steady disposition, which alone makes men great. I will, however, correct my faults, since I am conscious of them.'

Goldsmith's versatile talents and ready pen soon engaged him in the service of the booksellers; and, doubtless, the touches of his spirit and humour were used to enliven the dull pages of many a sorry miscellany and review; a mode of living which, joined to his own improvidence, rendered his income as fluctuating as his occupation. He wrote many essays for various periodical publications, and afterwards collected them into one volume, finding that they were unceremoniously appropriated by his contemporaries. In the preface he compares himself to the fat man in a famine, who, when his fellow-sufferers proposed to feast on the superfluous part of his person, insisted with some justice on having the first slice himself. But his most elaborate effort in this style is the *Citizen of the World*; letters supposed to be written by a Chinese philosopher, resident in England, in imitation of the *Lettres Persanes* of Montesquieu. Still, however, though subsisting thus precariously, he was getting forward in society; and had already, in the year 1761, made his way as far as Dr. Johnson, who seems, from their first acquaintance, till death separated them, to have entertained for Goldsmith the most sincere friendship, regarding his genius with respect, his failings with indulgence, and his person with affection. 10 20

It was probably soon after this first acquaintance that necessity, the parent of so many works of genius, gave birth to the *Vicar of Wakefield*. The circumstances attending the sale of the work to the fortunate publisher are too singular to be told in any other words than those of Johnson, as reported by his faithful chronicler, Boswell. 30

'I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith, that he was in great distress; and as it was not in his



power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated.  
10 He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return, and, having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill.'

Newbery, the purchaser of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, best known to the present generation by recollection of their infantine studies, was a man of worth as well as wealth,  
20 and the frequent patron of distressed genius. When he completed the bargain, which he probably entered into partly from compassion, partly from deference to Johnson's judgement, he had so little confidence in the value of his purchase, that the *Vicar of Wakefield* remained in manuscript until the publication of the *Traveller* had established the fame of the author.

For this beautiful poem Goldsmith had collected materials during his travels; and a part of it had been actually written in Switzerland, and transmitted from that country  
30 to the author's brother, the Reverend Dr. Henry Goldsmith. His distinguished friend, Dr. Johnson, aided him with several general hints; and is said to have contributed the sentiment which Goldsmith has so beautifully versified in the concluding lines.



The publication of the *Traveller* gave the author all that celebrity which he had so long laboured to attain. He now assumed the professional dress of the medical science, a scarlet cloak, wig, sword, and cane, and was admitted as a valued member of that distinguished society, which afterwards formed the Literary, or as it is more commonly called, emphatically, *The CLUB*. For this he made some sacrifices, renouncing some of the public places which he had formerly found convenient in point of expense and amusement; not without regret, for he used to say, 10  
'In truth, one must make some sacrifices to obtain good society; for here am I shut out of several places where I used to play the fool very agreeably.' It often happened amid those sharper wits with whom he now associated that the simplicity of his character, mingled with an inaccuracy of expression, an undistinguishing spirit of vanity, and a hurriedness of conception, which led him often into absurdity, rendered Dr. Goldsmith in some degree the butt of the company. Garrick, in particular, who probably presumed somewhat on the superiority of a theatrical manager 20 over a dramatic author, shot at him many shafts of small epigrammatic wit. It is probable that Goldsmith began to feel that this spirit was carried too far, and to check it in the best taste, he composed his celebrated poem of *Retaliation* in which the characters and failings of his associates are drawn with satire at once pungent and good-humoured. Garrick is smartly chastised; Burke, the dinner-bell of the House of Commons, is not spared; and of all the more distinguished names of the Club, Johnson and Reynolds alone escape the lash of the satirist. The 30 latter is even dismissed with unqualified and affectionate applause. *Retaliation* had the effect of placing the author on a more equal footing with his society than he had ever before assumed. Even against the despotism of Johnson,



though much respecting him, and as much beloved by him, Goldsmith made a more spirited stand than was generally ventured upon by the compeers of that arbitrary Sultan of Literature. Of this Boswell has recorded a striking instance. Goldsmith had been descanting on the difficulty and importance of making animals in an apologue speak in character, and particularly instanced the fable of the Little Fishes. Observing that Dr. Johnson was laughing scornfully, he proceeded smartly: 'Why, Dr. Johnson, this is  
10 not so easy as you seem to think, for if *you* were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales.'

To support the expense of his new dignities, Goldsmith laboured incessantly at the literary oar. The *Letters on the History of England*, commonly ascribed to Lord Lyttelton, and containing an excellent and entertaining abridgement of the *Annals of Britain*, are the work of Goldsmith. His mode of compiling them we learn from some interesting anecdotes of the author, communicated to the public by Lee Lewes, an actor of genius, whom he patronized, and  
20 with whom he often associated.

'He first read in a morning, from Hume, Rapin, and sometimes Kennet, as much as he designed for one letter, marking down the passages referred to on a sheet of paper, with remarks. He then rode or walked out with a friend or two, whom he constantly had with him; returned to dinner, spent the day generally convivially, without much drinking (which he was never in the habit of), and when he went up to bed, took up his books and paper with him, where he generally wrote the chapter, or the best part of it,  
30 before he went to rest. The latter exercise cost him very little trouble, he said; for having all his materials ready for him, he wrote it with as much facility as a common letter.

'But of all his compilations, he used to say, his *Selections*



*of English Poetry* showed more "the art of profession". Here he did nothing but mark the particular passages with a red lead pencil, and for this he got *two hundred pounds*—but then he used to add, "a man shows his judgement in these selections, and he may be often twenty years of his life cultivating that judgement".

Goldsmith, amid these more petty labours, aspired to the honours of the sock, and the *Good-Natured Man* was produced at Covent Garden, 29th January 1768, with the moderate success of nine nights' run. The principal 10 character the author probably drew from the weak side of his own; for no man was more liable than Goldsmith to be gulled by pretended friends. The character of Croaker, highly comic in itself, and admirably represented by Shuter, helped to save the piece, which was endangered by the scene of the bailiffs, then considered as too vulgar for the stage. Upon the whole, however, Goldsmith is said to have cleared five hundred pounds by this dramatic performance. He hired better chambers in the Temple, embarked more boldly in literary speculation, and unfortunately at 20 the same time enlarged his ideas of expense, and indulged his habit of playing at games of hazard. The *Memoirs*, or *Anecdotes*, which we have before quoted, give a minute and curious description of his habits and enjoyments about this period, when he was constantly occupied with extracts, abridgements, and other arts of book-making, but at the same time working slowly, and in secret, on those immortal verses which secure for him so high a rank among English poets.

'Goldsmith, though quick enough at prose, was rather 30 slow in his poetry—not from the tardiness of fancy, but the time he took in pointing the sentiment and polishing the versification. He was, by his own confession, four or five years collecting materials in all his country excursions



for this poem, and was actually engaged in the construction of it above two years. His manner of writing poetry was this: he first sketched a part of his design in prose, in which he threw out his ideas as they occurred to him; he then sat carefully down to versify them, correct them, and add such other ideas as he thought better fitted to the subject. He sometimes would exceed his prose design by writing several verses impromptu, but these he would take uncommon pains afterwards to revise, lest they should be  
10 found unconnected with his main design.

‘The writer of these Memoirs (Lee Lewes) called upon the Doctor the second morning after he had begun the *Deserted Village*, and to him he communicated the plan of his poem. “Some of my friends,” continued he, “differ with me on this plan, and think this depopulation of villages does not exist—but I am myself satisfied of the fact. I remember it in my own country, and have seen it in this.” He then read what he had done of it that morning, beginning—

20 Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,  
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,  
How often have I loiter’d o’er thy green,  
Where humble happiness endear’d each scene!  
How often have I paused on every charm—  
The shelter’d cot—the cultivated farm—  
The never-failing brook—the busy mill—  
The decent church, that tops [topt] the neighbouring hill—  
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,  
For talking age and whispering lovers made!

30 “Come,” says he, “let me tell you this is no bad morning’s work; and now, my dear boy, if you are not better engaged, I should be glad to enjoy a *Shoemaker’s Holiday* with you.” This *Shoemaker’s Holiday* was a day of



great festivity to poor Goldsmith, and was spent in the following innocent manner:—

‘Three or four of his intimate friends rendezvoused at his chambers, to breakfast, about ten o’clock in the morning; at eleven they proceeded to the City Road, and through the fields to Highbury Barn, to dinner; about six o’clock in the evening they adjourned to White Conduit House, to drink tea; and concluded the evening by supping at the Grecian or Temple Exchange Coffee-houses, or at the Globe, in Fleet Street. There was a very good ordinary of two 10 dishes and pastry kept at Highbury Barn about this time (five and twenty years ago, in 1796), at tenpence per head, including a penny to the waiter; and the company generally consisted of literary characters, a few Templars, and some citizens who had left off trade. The whole expenses of this day’s fête never exceeded a crown, and oftener from three and sixpence to four shillings, for which the party obtained good air and exercise, good living, the example of simple manners, and good conversation.’

The reception given to the *Deserted Village*, so full of 20 natural elegance, simplicity, and pathos, was of the warmest kind. The publisher showed at once his skill and generosity, by pressing upon Dr. Goldsmith a hundred pounds, which the author insisted upon returning, when, upon computation, he found that it came to nearly a crown for every couplet, a sum which he conceived no poem could be worth. The sale of the poem made him ample amends for this unusual instance of moderation. Lissoy, near Ballymahon, where his brother, the clergyman, had his living, claims the honour of being the spot from which the 30 localities of the *Deserted Village* were derived. The church which tops the neighbouring hill, the mill, and the lake, are still pointed out; and a hawthorn has suffered the penalty of poetical celebrity, being cut to pieces by those



admirers of the bard who desired to have classical toothpick cases and tobacco-stoppers. Much of this supposed locality may be fanciful, but it is a pleasing tribute to the poet in the land of his fathers.

Goldsmith's *Abridgements of the History of Rome and England* may here be noticed. They are eminently well calculated to introduce youth to the knowledge of their studies; for they exhibit the most interesting and striking events, without entering into controversy or dry detail. 10 Yet the tone assumed in the *History of England* drew on the author the resentment of the more zealous Whigs, who accused him of betraying the liberties of the people, when, 'God knows,' as he expresses himself in a letter to Langton, 'I had no thought for or against liberty in my head; my whole aim being to make up a book of a decent size, and which, as Squire Richard says, would do no harm to nobody.'

His celebrated play of *She Stoops to Conquer* was Goldsmith's next work of importance. If it be the object 20 of comedy to make an audience laugh, Johnson says that it was better obtained by this play than by any other of the period. Lee Lewes was, for the first time, produced in a speaking character, as young Marlow, and is, therefore, entitled to record his own recollections concerning the piece.

'The first night of its performance, Goldsmith, instead of being at the theatre, was found sauntering, between seven and eight o'clock, in the Mall, St. James's Park; and it was on the remonstrance of a friend, who told him how useful his presence might be in making some sudden 30 alterations which might be found necessary in the piece, that he was prevailed on to go to the theatre. He entered the stage-door just in the middle of the fifth act, when there was a hiss at the improbability of Mrs. Hardcastle supposing herself forty miles off, though on her own



grounds, and near the house. "What's that?" says the Doctor, terrified at the sound. "Pshaw! Doctor," said Colman, who was standing by the side of the scene, "don't be fearful of *squibs*, when we have been sitting almost these two hours upon a barrel of gunpowder."

'In the *Life of Dr. Goldsmith* prefixed to his *Works*, the above reply of Colman's is said to have happened at the last rehearsal of the piece; but the fact was (I had it from the Doctor himself) as I have stated, and he never forgave it to Colman to the last hour of his life.'

10

It may be here noticed that the leading incident of the piece was borrowed from a blunder of the author himself, who, while travelling in Ireland, actually mistook a gentleman's residence for an inn.

It must be owned, that however kind, amiable, and benevolent Goldsmith showed himself to his contemporaries, more especially to such as needed his assistance, he had no small portion of the jealous and irritable spirit proper to the literary profession. He suffered a newspaper lampoon about this time to bring him into a foolish affray with 20 Evans, the bookseller, which did him but little credit.

In the meantime a neglect of economy, occasional losses at play, and too great a reliance on his own versatility and readiness of talent, had considerably embarrassed his affairs. He felt the pressure of many engagements, for which he had received advances of money, and which it was, nevertheless, impossible for him to carry on with that dispatch which the booksellers thought themselves entitled to expect. One of his last publications was a *History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, in six volumes, which is to science what 30 his abridgements are to history; a book which indicates no depth of research or accuracy of information; but which presents to the ordinary reader a general and interesting view of the subject, couched in the clearest and most



beautiful language, and abounding with excellent reflections and illustrations. It was of this work that Johnson threw out the remark which he afterwards interwove in his friend's epitaph: 'He is now writing a Natural History, and will make it as agreeable as a Persian Tale.'

But the period of his labours was now near. Goldsmith had for some time been subject to fits of the strangury, brought on by too severe application to sedentary labours; and one of those attacks, aggravated by mental distress, produced a fever. In spite of cautions to the contrary, he had recourse to Dr. James's fever powders, from which he received no relief. He died on the 4th of April 1774, and was privately interred in the Temple burial-ground. A monument, erected by subscription in Westminster Abbey, bears a Latin inscription from the pen of Dr. Johnson:—

# OLIVARII GOLDSMITH,

Poetæ, Physici, Historici,

Qui nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit,

Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit,

Sive risus essent movendi,

Sive lacrymæ,

Affectuum potens at lenis dominator.

Ingenio, sublimis, vividus, versatilis;

Oratione, grandis, nitidus, venustus:

Hoc monumento memoriam coluit,

Sodalium amor,

Amicorum fides,

Lectorum veneratio.

Natus Hibernia Forneiae Lonfordiensis,

In loco cui nomen Pallas,

Nov. XXIX. MDCCXXI,

Eblanæ literis institutus,

Obiit Londini,

Arpil IV. MDCCLXXIV.



This elegant epitaph was the subject of a petition to Doctor Johnson, in the form of a round robin, entreating him to substitute an English inscription, as more proper for an author who had distinguished himself entirely by works written in English ; but the Doctor kept his purpose.

The person and features of Dr. Goldsmith were rather unfavourable. He was a short stout man, with a round face, much marked with the smallpox, and a low forehead, which is represented as projecting in a singular manner. Yet these ordinary features were marked by a strong 10 expression of reflection and of observation.

The peculiarities of Goldsmith's disposition have been already touched upon in the preceding narrative. He was a friend to virtue, and in his most playful pages never forgets what is due to her. A gentleness, delicacy, and purity of feeling distinguishes whatever he wrote, and bears a correspondence to the generosity of a disposition which knew no bounds but his last guinea. It were almost essential to such a temper that he wanted the proper guards of firmness and decision, and permitted, even 20 when aware of their worthlessness, the intrusions of cunning and effrontery. The story of the *White Mice* is well known ; and in the humorous history of the *Haunch of Venison* Goldsmith has recorded another instance of his being duped. This could not be entirely out of simplicity ; for he who could so well embody and record the impositions of Master Jenkinson might surely have penetrated the schemes of more ordinary swindlers. But Goldsmith could not give a refusal ; and, being thus cheated with his eyes open, no man could be a surer or easier victim to the 30 impostors whose arts he could so well describe. He might certainly have accepted the draft on neighbour Flamborough and indubitably would have made the celebrated bargain of the gross of green spectacles. With this gullibility



of temper was mixed a hasty and eager jealousy of his own personal consequence; he unwillingly admitted that anything was done better than he himself could have performed it; and sometimes made himself ridiculous by hastily undertaking to distinguish himself upon subjects which he did not understand. But with these weaknesses, and with that of carelessness in his own affairs, terminates all that censure can say of Goldsmith. The folly of submitting to imposition may be well balanced with the  
10 universality of his benevolence; and the wit which his writings evince more than counterbalances his defects in conversation. 'As a writer,' says Dr. Johnson, 'he was of the most distinguished class. Whatever he composed he did it better than any other man could. And whether we regard him as a poet, as a comic writer, or as a historian, he was one of the first writers of his time, and will ever stand in the foremost class.'

Excepting some short tales, Goldsmith gave to the department of the novelist only one work, the inimitable  
20 *Vicar of Wakefield*. We have seen that it was suppressed for nearly two years, until the publication of the *Traveller* had fixed the author's fame. Goldsmith had, therefore, time for revisal, but he did not employ it. He had been paid for his labour, as he observed, and could have profited nothing by rendering the work ever so perfect. This, however, was false reasoning, though not unnatural in the mouth of the author, who must earn daily bread by daily labour. The narrative, which in itself is as simple as possible, might have been cleared of certain improbabilities,  
30 or rather impossibilities, which it now exhibits. We cannot, for instance, conceive how Sir William Thornhill should contrive to masquerade under the name of Burchell, among his own tenantry, and upon his own estate; and it is absolutely impossible to see how his nephew, the son,



doubtless, of a younger brother (since Sir William inherited both title and property), should be nearly as old as the baronet himself. It may be added that the character of Burchell, or Sir William Thornhill, is in itself extravagantly unnatural. A man of his benevolence would never have so long left his nephew in the possession of wealth which he employed to the worst of purposes. Far less would he have permitted his scheme upon Olivia in a great measure to succeed, and that upon Sophia also to approach consummation; for, in the first instance, he does 10 not interfere at all, and in the second, his intervention is accidental. These, and some other little circumstances in the progress of the narrative, might easily have been removed upon revisal.

But whatever defects occur in the tenor of the story, the admirable ease and grace of the narrative, as well as the pleasing truth with which the principal characters are designed, make the *Vicar of Wakefield* one of the most delicious morsels of fictitious composition on which the human mind was ever employed. The principal character, 20 that of the simple pastor himself, with all the worth and excellency which ought to distinguish the ambassador of God to man, and yet with just so much of pedantry and of literary vanity as serves to show that he is made of mortal mould, and subject to human failings, is one of the best and most pleasing pictures ever designed. It is, perhaps, impossible to place frail humanity before us in an attitude of more simple dignity than the Vicar, in the character of pastor, of parent, and of husband. His excellent helpmate, with all her motherly cunning, and housewifely prudence, 30 loving and respecting her husband, but counterplotting his wisest schemes at the dictates of maternal vanity, forms an excellent counterpart. Both, with their children around them, their quiet labour and domestic happiness, compose



a fireside picture of such a perfect kind, as, perhaps, is nowhere else equalled. It is sketched, indeed, from common life, and is a strong contrast to the exaggerated and extraordinary characters and incidents which are the resource of those authors, who, like Bayes, make it their business to elevate and surprise ; but the very simplicity of this charming book renders the pleasure it affords more permanent. We read the *Vicar of Wakefield* in youth and in age. We return to it again and again, and bless the memory  
10 of an author who contrives so well to reconcile us to human nature. Whether we choose the pathetic and distressing incidents of the fire, and the scenes at the jail, or the lighter and humorous parts of the story, we find the best and truest sentiments enforced in the most beautiful language ; and perhaps there are few characters of purer dignity have been described than that of the excellent pastor rising above sorrow and oppression, and labouring for the conversion of those felons into whose company he had been thrust by his villainous creditor. In too many  
20 works of this class the critics must apologize for or censure particular passages in the narrative as unfit to be perused by youth and innocence. But the wreath of Goldsmith is unsullied ; he wrote to exalt virtue and expose vice ; and he accomplished his task in a manner which raises him to the highest rank among British authors. We close his volume with a sigh that such an author should have written so little from the stores of his own genius, and that he should have been so prematurely removed from the sphere of literature which he adorned.



## MACAULAY'S LIFE OF GOLDSMITH

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, one of the most pleasing English writers of the eighteenth century. He was of a Protestant and Saxon family which had been long settled in Ireland, and which had, like most other Protestant and Saxon families, been, in troubled times, harassed and put in fear by the native population. His father, Charles Goldsmith, studied in the reign of Queen Anne at the diocesan school of Elphin, became attached to the daughter of the schoolmaster, married her, took orders, and settled at a place called Pallas in the county of Longford. There he with 10 difficulty supported his wife and children on what he could earn, partly as a curate and partly as a farmer.

At Pallas Oliver Goldsmith was born in November 1728. That spot was then, for all practical purposes, almost as remote from the busy and splendid capital in which his later years were passed, as any clearing in Upper Canada or any sheep-walk in Australasia now is. Even at this day those enthusiasts who venture to make a pilgrimage to the birthplace of the poet are forced to perform the latter part of their journey on foot. The hamlet lies far from 20 any high road, on a dreary plain which, in wet weather, is often a lake. The lanes would break any jaunting car to pieces; and there are ruts and sloughs through which the most strongly built wheels cannot be dragged.

While Oliver was still a child his father was presented to a living worth about £200 a-year, in the county of Westmeath. The family accordingly quitted their cottage in the wilderness for a spacious house on a frequented road, near the village of Lissoy. Here the boy was taught his



letters by a maid-servant, and was sent in his seventh year to a village school kept by an old quartermaster on half-pay, who professed to teach nothing but reading, writing, and arithmetic, but who had an inexhaustible fund of stories about ghosts, banshees, and fairies, about the great Rapparee chiefs, Baldearg O'Donnell and galloping Hogan, and about the exploits of Peterborough and Stanhope, the surprise of Monjuich, and the glorious disaster of Brihuega. This man must have been of the Protestant religion; but he was  
 10 of the aboriginal race, and not only spoke the Irish language, but could pour forth unpremeditated Irish verses. Oliver early became, and through life continued to be, a passionate admirer of the Irish music, and especially of the compositions of Carolan, some of the last notes of whose harp he heard. It ought to be added that Oliver, though by birth one of the Englishry, and though connected by numerous ties with the Established Church, never showed the least sign of that contemptuous antipathy with which, in his days, the ruling minority in Ireland too generally regarded the subject  
 20 majority. So far indeed was he from sharing in the opinions and feelings of the caste to which he belonged, that he conceived an aversion to the Glorious and Immortal Memory, and, even when George the Third was on the throne, maintained that nothing but the restoration of the banished dynasty could save the country.

From the humble academy kept by the old soldier Goldsmith was removed in his ninth year. He went to several grammar-schools and acquired some knowledge of the ancient languages. His life at this time seems to have  
 30 been far from happy. He had, as appears from the admirable portrait of him at Knowle, features harsh even to ugliness. The small-pox had set its mark on him with more than usual severity. His stature was small, and his limbs ill put together. Among boys little tenderness is



shown to personal defects ; and the ridicule excited by poor Oliver's appearance was heightened by a peculiar simplicity and a disposition to blunder which he retained to the last. He became the common butt of boys and masters, was pointed at as a fright in the play-ground, and flogged as a dunce in the school-room. When he had risen to eminence, those who had once derided him ransacked their memory for the events of his early years, and recited repartees and couplets which had dropped from him, and which, though little noticed at the time, were supposed, a quarter of 10 a century later, to indicate the powers which produced the *Vicar of Wakefield* and the *Deserted Village*.

In his seventeenth year Oliver went up to Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar. The sizars paid nothing for food and tuition, and very little for lodging ; but they had to perform some menial services from which they have long been relieved. They swept the court : they carried up the dinner to the fellows' table, and changed the plates and poured out the ale of the rulers of the society. Goldsmith was quartered, not alone, in a garret, on the window of which his name, 20 scrawled by himself, is still read with interest. From such garrets many men of less parts than his have made their way to the woolsack or to the episcopal bench. But Goldsmith, while he suffered all the humiliations, threw away all the advantages of his situation. He neglected the studies of the place, stood low at the examinations, was turned down to the bottom of his class for playing the buffoon in the lecture-room, was severely reprimanded for pumping on a constable, and was caned by a brutal tutor for giving a ball in the attic story of the college to some 30 gay youths and damsels from the city.

While Oliver was leading at Dublin a life divided between squalid distress and squalid dissipation, his father died, leaving a mere pittance. The youth obtained his



bachelor's degree, and left the university. During some time the humble dwelling to which his widowed mother had retired was his home. He was now in his twenty-first year; it was necessary that he should do something; and his education seemed to have fitted him to do nothing but to dress himself in gaudy colours, of which he was as fond as a magpie, to take a hand at cards, to sing Irish airs, to play the flute, to angle in summer, and to tell ghost stories by the fire in winter. He tried five or six professions  
10 in turn without success. He applied for ordination; but, as he applied in scarlet clothes, he was speedily turned out of the episcopal palace. He then became tutor in an opulent family, but soon quitted his situation in consequence of a dispute about play. Then he determined to emigrate to America. His relations, with much satisfaction, saw him set out for Cork on a good horse, with thirty pounds in his pocket. But in six weeks he came back on a miserable hack, without a penny, and informed his mother that the ship in which he had taken his passage, having got a fair  
20 wind while he was at a party of pleasure, had sailed without him. Then he resolved to study the law. A generous kinsman advanced fifty pounds. With this sum Goldsmith went to Dublin, was enticed into a gaming house, and lost every shilling. He then thought of medicine. A small purse was made up; and in his twenty-fourth year he was sent to Edinburgh. At Edinburgh he passed eighteen months in nominal attendance on lectures, and picked up some superficial information about chemistry and natural history. Thence he went to Leyden, still pretending to  
30 study physic. He left that celebrated university, the third university at which he had resided, in his twenty-seventh year, without a degree, with the merest smattering of medical knowledge, and with no property but his clothes and his flute. His flute, however, proved a useful friend.



He rambled on foot through Flanders, France, and Switzerland, playing tunes which everywhere set the peasantry dancing, and which often procured for him a supper and a bed. He wandered as far as Italy. His musical performances, indeed, were not to the taste of the Italians; but he contrived to live on the alms which he obtained at the gates of convents. It should, however, be observed, that the stories which he told about this part of his life ought to be received with great caution; for strict veracity was never one of his virtues; and a man 10 who is ordinarily inaccurate in narration is likely to be more than ordinarily inaccurate when he talks about his own travels. Goldsmith, indeed, was so regardless of truth as to assert in print that he was present at a most interesting conversation between Voltaire and Fontenelle, and that this conversation took place at Paris. Now it is certain that Voltaire never was within a hundred leagues of Paris during the whole time which Goldsmith passed on the Continent.

In 1756 the wanderer landed at Dover, without a shilling, without a friend, and without a calling. He had indeed, if 20 his own unsupported evidence may be trusted, obtained from the University of Padua a doctor's degree; but this dignity proved utterly useless to him. In England his flute was not in request: there were no convents; and he was forced to have recourse to a series of desperate expedients. He turned strolling player; but his face and figure were ill suited to the boards even of the humblest theatre. He pounded drugs and ran about London with phials for charitable chemists. He joined a swarm of beggars, which made its nest in Axe Yard. He was for a time usher 30 of a school, and felt the miseries and humiliations of this situation so keenly, that he thought it a promotion to be permitted to earn his bread as a bookseller's hack; but he soon found the new yoke more galling than the old one, and



was glad to become an usher again. He obtained a medical appointment in the service of the East India Company; but the appointment was speedily revoked. Why it was revoked we are not told. The subject was one on which he never liked to talk. It is probable that he was incompetent to perform the duties of the place. Then he presented himself at Surgeons' Hall for examination as mate to a naval hospital. Even to so humble a post he was found unequal. By this time the schoolmaster whom he had served for  
 10 a morsel of food and the third part of a bed was no more. Nothing remained but to return to the lowest drudgery of literature. Goldsmith took a garret in a miserable court, to which he had to climb from the brink of Fleet Ditch by a dizzy ladder of flagstones called Breakneck Steps. The court and the ascent have long disappeared; but old Londoners well remember both. Here, at thirty, the unlucky adventurer sat down to toil like a galley slave.

In the succeeding six years he sent to the press some things which have survived, and many which have perished.  
 20 He produced articles for reviews, magazines, and newspapers; children's books, which, bound in gilt paper and adorned with hideous woodcuts, appeared in the window of the once far-famed shop at the corner of Saint Paul's Churchyard; *An Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe*, which, though of little or no value, is still reprinted among his works; a *Life of Beau Nash*, which is not reprinted, though it well deserves to be so; a superficial and incorrect, but very readable, *History of England*, in a series of letters purporting to be addressed by  
 80 a nobleman to his son; and some very lively and amusing *Sketches of London Society*, in a series of letters purporting to be addressed by a Chinese traveller to his friends. All these works were anonymous; but some of them were well known to be Goldsmith's; and he gradually rose in the



estimation of the booksellers for whom he drudged. He was, indeed, emphatically a popular writer. For accurate research or grave disquisition he was not well qualified by nature or by education. He knew nothing accurately : his reading had been desultory ; nor had he meditated deeply on what he had read. He had seen much of the world ; but he had noticed and retained little more of what he had seen than some grotesque incidents and characters which had happened to strike his fancy. But, though his mind was very scantily stored with materials, he used what materials 10 he had in such a way as to produce a wonderful effect. There have been many greater writers ; but perhaps no writer was ever more uniformly agreeable. His style was always pure and easy, and, on proper occasions, pointed and energetic. His narratives were always amusing, his descriptions always picturesque, his humour rich and joyous, yet not without an occasional tinge of amiable sadness. About everything that he wrote, serious or sportive, there was a certain natural grace and decorum, hardly to be expected from a man a great part of whose life had been passed among 20 thieves and beggars, street-walkers and merry-andrews, in those squalid dens which are the reproach of great capitals.

As his name gradually became known, the circle of his acquaintance widened. He was introduced to Johnson, who was then considered as the first of living English writers ; to Reynolds, the first of English painters ; and to Burke, who had not yet entered Parliament, but had distinguished himself greatly by his writings and by the eloquence of his conversation. With these eminent men Goldsmith became intimate. In 1763 he was one of the nine original members 30 of that celebrated fraternity which has sometimes been called the Literary Club, but which has always disclaimed that epithet, and still glories in the simple name of The Club.

By this time Goldsmith had quitted his miserable dwelling



at the top of Breakneck Steps, and had taken chambers in the more civilized region of the Inns of Court. But he was still often reduced to pitiable shifts. Towards the close of 1764 his rent was so long in arrear that his landlady one morning called in the help of a sheriff's officer. The debtor, in great perplexity, dispatched a messenger to Johnson; and Johnson, always friendly, though often surly, sent back the messenger with a guinea, and promised to follow speedily. He came, and found that Goldsmith had changed  
 10 the guinea, and was railing at the landlady over a bottle of Madeira. Johnson put the cork into the bottle, and entreated his friend to consider calmly how money was to be procured. Goldsmith said that he had a novel ready for the press. Johnson glanced at the manuscript, saw that there were good things in it, took it to a bookseller, sold it for £60, and soon returned with the money. The rent was paid; and the sheriff's officer withdrew. According to one story, Goldsmith gave his landlady a sharp reprimand for her treatment of him; according to another, he insisted  
 20 on her joining him in a bowl of punch. Both stories are probably true. The novel which was thus ushered into the world was the *Vicar of Wakefield*.

But before the *Vicar of Wakefield* appeared in print, came the great crisis of Goldsmith's literary life. In Christmas week 1764, he published a poem, entitled the *Traveller*. It was the first work to which he had put his name; and it at once raised him to the rank of a legitimate English classic. The opinion of the most skilful critics was, that nothing finer had appeared in verse since the fourth book  
 30 of the *Dunciad*. In one respect the *Traveller* differs from all Goldsmith's other writings. In general his designs were bad, and his execution good. In the *Traveller*, the execution, though deserving of much praise, is far inferior to the design. No philosophical poem, ancient or modern, has



a plan so noble, and at the same time so simple. An English wanderer, seated on a crag among the Alps, near the point where three great countries meet, looks down on the boundless prospect, reviews his long pilgrimage, recalls the varieties of scenery, of climate, of government, of religion, of national character, which he has observed, and comes to the conclusion, just or unjust, that our happiness depends little on political institutions, and much on the temper and regulation of our own minds.

While the fourth edition of the *Traveller* was on the 10 counters of the booksellers, the *Vicar of Wakefield* appeared, and rapidly obtained a popularity which has lasted down to our own time, and which is likely to last as long as our language. The fable is indeed one of the worst that ever was constructed. It wants, not merely that probability which ought to be found in a tale of common English life, but that consistency which ought to be found even in the wildest fiction about witches, giants, and fairies. But the earlier chapters have all the sweetness of pastoral poetry, together with all the vivacity of comedy. Moses and his spectacles, the vicar 20 and his monogamy, the sharper and his cosmogony, the squire proving from Aristotle that relatives are related, Olivia preparing herself for the arduous task of converting a rakish lover by studying the controversy between Robinson Crusoe and Friday, the great ladies with their scandal about Sir Tomkyn's amours and Dr. Burdock's verses, and Mr. Burchell with his 'Fudge', have caused as much harmless mirth as has ever been caused by matter packed into so small a number of pages. The latter part of the tale is unworthy of the beginning. As we approach the catastrophe, the absurdities 30 lie thicker and thicker; and the gleams of pleasantry become rarer and rarer.

The success which had attended Goldsmith as a novelist emboldened him to try his fortune as a dramatist. He



wrote the *Goodnatured Man*, a piece which had a worse fate than it deserved. Garrick refused to produce it at Drury Lane. It was acted at Covent Garden in 1768, but was coldly received. The author, however, cleared by his benefit nights, and by the sale of the copyright, no less than £500, five times as much as he had made by the *Traveller* and the *Vicar of Wakefield* together. The plot of the *Goodnatured Man* is, like almost all Goldsmith's plots, very ill constructed. But some passages are exquisitely ludicrous; much more  
 10 ludicrous, indeed, than suited the taste of the town at that time. A canting, mawkish play, entitled *False Delicacy*, had just had an immense run. Sentimentality was all the mode. During some years, more tears were shed at comedies than at tragedies; and a pleasantry which moved the audience to anything more than a grave smile was reprobated as low. It is not strange, therefore, that the very best scene in the *Goodnatured Man*, that in which Miss Richland finds her lover attended by the bailiff and the bailiff's follower in full court dresses, should have been mercilessly hissed, and  
 20 should have been omitted after the first night.

In 1770 appeared the *Deserted Village*. In mere diction and versification this celebrated poem is fully equal, perhaps superior to the *Traveller*; and it is generally preferred to the *Traveller* by that large class of readers who think, with Bayes in the *Rehearsal*, that the only use of a plan is to bring in fine things. More discerning judges, however, while they admire the beauty of the details, are shocked by one unpardonable fault which pervades the whole. The fault which we mean is not that theory  
 30 about wealth and luxury which has so often been censured by political economists. The theory is indeed false: but the poem, considered merely as a poem, is not necessarily the worse on that account. The finest poem in the Latin language, indeed the finest didactic poem in any language,



was written in defence of the silliest and meanest of all systems of natural and moral philosophy. A poet may easily be pardoned for reasoning ill; but he cannot be pardoned for describing ill, for observing the world in which he lives so carelessly that his portraits bear no resemblance to the originals, for exhibiting as copies from real life monstrous combinations of things which never were and never could be found together. What would be thought of a painter who should mix August and January in one landscape, who should introduce a frozen river into a harvest scene? 10 Would it be a sufficient defence of such a picture to say that every part was exquisitely coloured, that the green hedges, the apple-trees loaded with fruit, the wagons reeling under the yellow sheaves, and the sun-burned reapers wiping their foreheads were very fine, and that the ice and the boys sliding were also very fine? To such a picture the *Deserted Village* bears a great resemblance. It is made up of incongruous parts. The village in its happy days is a true English village. The village in its decay is an Irish village. The felicity and the misery which Goldsmith has brought close 20 together belong to two different countries, and to two different stages in the progress of society. He had assuredly never seen in his native island such a rural paradise, such a seat of plenty, content, and tranquillity, as his *Auburn*. He had assuredly never seen in England all the inhabitants of such a paradise turned out of their homes in one day and forced to emigrate in a body to America. The hamlet he had probably seen in Kent: the ejection he had probably seen in Munster; but by joining the two, he has produced something which never was and never will be seen in any part 30 of the world.

In 1773 Goldsmith tried his chance at Covent Garden with a second play, *She Stoops to Conquer*. The manager was not without great difficulty induced to bring this piece



out. The sentimental comedy still reigned, and Goldsmith's comedies were not sentimental. The *Goodnatured Man* had been too funny to succeed; yet the mirth of the *Goodnatured Man* was sober when compared with the rich drollery of *She Stoops to Conquer*, which is, in truth, an incomparable farce in five acts. On this occasion, however, genius triumphed. Pit, boxes, and galleries, were in a constant roar of laughter. If any bigoted admirer of Kelly and Cumberland ventured to hiss or groan, he was speedily silenced by a general cry  
 10 of 'turn him out', or 'throw him over'. Two generations have since confirmed the verdict which was pronounced on that night.

While Goldsmith was writing the *Deserted Village* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, he was employed on works of a very different kind, works from which he derived little reputation but much profit. He compiled for the use of schools a *History of Rome* by which he made £300, a *History of England* by which he made £600, a *History of Greece* for which he received £250, a *Natural History*, for which the  
 20 booksellers covenanted to pay him 800 guineas. These works he produced without any elaborate research, by merely selecting, abridging, and translating into his own clear, pure, and flowing language, what he found in books well known to the world, but too bulky or too dry for boys and girls. He committed some strange blunders: for he knew nothing with accuracy. Thus in his *History of England* he tells us that Naseby is in Yorkshire; nor did he correct this mistake when the book was reprinted. He was  
 30 very nearly hoaxed into putting into the *History of Greece* an account of a battle between Alexander the Great and Montezuma. In his *Animated Nature* he relates, with faith and with perfect gravity, all the most absurd lies which he could find in books of travels about gigantic Patagonians, monkeys that preach sermons, nightingales that repeat long



conversations. 'If he can tell a horse from a cow,' said Johnson, 'that is the extent of his knowledge of zoology.' How little Goldsmith was qualified to write about the physical sciences is sufficiently proved by two anecdotes. He on one occasion denied that the sun is longer in the northern than in the southern signs. It was vain to cite the authority of Maupertuis. 'Maupertuis!' he cried, 'I understand those matters better than Maupertuis.' On another occasion he, in defiance of the evidence of his own senses, maintained obstinately, and even angrily, that he chewed 10 his dinner by moving his upper jaw.

Yet, ignorant as Goldsmith was, few writers have done more to make the first steps in the laborious road to knowledge easy and pleasant. His compilations are widely distinguished from the compilations of ordinary bookmakers. He was a great, perhaps an unequalled, master of the arts of selection and condensation. In these respects his histories of Rome and of England, and still more his own abridgements of these histories, well deserved to be studied. In general nothing is less attractive than an epitome: but 20 the epitomes of Goldsmith, even when most concise, are always amusing; and to read them is considered by intelligent children, not as a task but as a pleasure.

Goldsmith might now be considered as a prosperous man. He had the means of living in comfort, and even in what to one who had so often slept in barns and on bulks must have been luxury. His fame was great and was constantly rising. He lived in what was intellectually far the best society of the kingdom, in a society in which no talent or accomplishment was wanting, and in which the art of 30 conversation was cultivated with splendid success. There probably were never four talkers more admirable in four different ways than Johnson, Burke, Beauclerk, and Garrick; and Goldsmith was on terms of intimacy with all the four.



He aspired to share in their colloquial renown; but never was ambition more unfortunate. It may seem strange that a man who wrote with so much perspicuity, vivacity, and grace, should have been, whenever he took a part in conversation, an empty, noisy, blundering, rattle. But on this point the evidence is overwhelming. So extraordinary was the contrast between Goldsmith's published works and the silly things which he said, that Horace Walpole described him as an inspired idiot. 'Noll', said Garrick, 'wrote like an  
 10 angel, and talked like poor Pol,' Chamier declared that it was a hard exercise of faith to believe that so foolish a chatterer could have really written the *Traveller*. Even Boswell could say, with contemptuous compassion, that he liked very well to hear honest Goldsmith run on. 'Yes, sir,' said Johnson, 'but he should not like to hear himself.' Minds differ as rivers differ. There are transparent and sparkling rivers from which it is delightful to drink as they flow; to such rivers the minds of such men as Burke and Johnson may be compared. But there are rivers of which  
 20 the water when first drawn is turbid and noisome, but becomes pellucid as crystal and delicious to the taste if it be suffered to stand till it has deposited a sediment; and such a river is a type of the mind of Goldsmith. His first thoughts on every subject were confused even to absurdity, but they required only a little time to work themselves clear. When he wrote they had that time; and therefore his readers pronounced him a man of genius: but when he talked he talked nonsense, and made himself the laughing-stock of his hearers. He was painfully sensible of his  
 30 inferiority in conversation; he felt every failure keenly; yet he had not sufficient judgement and self-command to hold his tongue. His animal spirits and vanity were always impelling him to try to do the one thing which he could not do. After every attempt he felt that he had exposed



himself, and writhed with shame and vexation ; yet the next moment he began again.

His associates seem to have regarded him with kindness, which, in spite of their admiration of his writings, was not unmixed with contempt. In truth, there was in his character much to love, but very little to respect. His heart was soft even to weakness : he was so generous, that he quite forgot to be just ; he forgave injuries so readily, that he might be said to invite them, and was so liberal to beggars, that he had nothing left for his tailor and his 10 butcher. He was vain, sensual, frivolous, profuse, improvident. One vice of a darker shade was imputed to him, envy. But there is not the least reason to believe that this bad passion, though it sometimes made him wince and utter fretful exclamations, ever impelled him to injure by wicked arts the reputation of any of his rivals. The truth probably is, that he was not more envious, but merely less prudent than his neighbours. His heart was on his lips. All those small jealousies, which are but too common among men of letters, but which a man of letters who is 20 also a man of the world does his best to conceal, Goldsmith avowed with the simplicity of a child. When he was envious, instead of affecting indifference, instead of damning with faint praise, instead of doing injuries slyly and in the dark, he told everybody that he was envious. 'Do not, pray, do not, talk of Johnson in such terms,' he said to Boswell ; 'you harrow up my very soul.' George Steevens and Cumberland were men far too cunning to say such a thing. They would have echoed the praises of the man whom they envied, and then have sent to the newspapers 30 anonymous libels upon him. Both what was good and what was bad in Goldsmith's character was to his associates a perfect security that he would never commit such villany. He was neither ill-natured enough, nor long-headed enough,



to be guilty of any malicious act which required contrivance and disguise.

Goldsmith has sometimes been represented as a man of genius, cruelly treated by the world, and doomed to struggle with difficulties, which at last broke his heart. But no representation can be more remote from the truth. He did, indeed, go through much sharp misery before he had done anything considerable in literature. But after his name had appeared on the title-page of the *Traveller*, he  
 10 had none but himself to blame for his distresses. His average income, during the last seven years of his life, certainly exceeded £400 a-year, and £400 a-year ranked, among the incomes of that day, at least as high as £800 a-year would rank at present. A single man living in the Temple, with £400 a-year, might then be called opulent. Not one in ten of the young gentlemen of good families who were studying the law there had so much. But all the wealth which Lord Clive had brought from Bengal, and Sir Lawrence Dundas from Germany, joined  
 20 together, would not have sufficed for Goldsmith. He spent twice as much as he had. He wore fine clothes, gave dinners of several courses, paid court to venal beauties. He had also, it should be remembered, to the honour of his heart, though not of his head, a guinea, or five, or ten, according to the state of his purse, ready for any tale of distress, true or false. But it was not in dress or feasting, in promiscuous amours or promiscuous charities, that his chief expense lay. He had been from boyhood a gambler, and at once the most sanguine and the most unskilful of  
 30 gamblers. For a time he put off the day of inevitable ruin by temporary expedients. He obtained advances from booksellers, by promising to execute works which he never began. But at length this source of supply failed. He owed more than £2,000; and he saw no hope of extrication from his



embarrassments. His spirits and health gave way. He was attacked by a nervous fever, which he thought himself competent to treat. It would have been happy for him if his medical skill had been appreciated as justly by himself as by others. Notwithstanding the degree which he pretended to have received at Padua, he could procure no patients. 'I do not practise,' he once said; 'I make it a rule to prescribe only for my friends.' 'Pray, dear Doctor,' said Beauclerk, 'alter your rule; and prescribe only for your enemies.' Goldsmith now, in spite of this 10 excellent advice, prescribed for himself. The remedy aggravated the malady. The sick man was induced to call in real physicians; and they at one time imagined that they had cured the disease. Still his weakness and restlessness continued. He could get no sleep. He could take no food. 'You are worse', said one of his medical attendants, 'than you should be from the degree of fever which you have. Is your mind at ease?' 'No; it is not,' were the last recorded words of Oliver Goldsmith. He died on the 3rd of April, 1774, in his forty-sixth year. 20 He was laid in the churchyard of the Temple; but the spot was not marked by any inscription, and is now forgotten. The coffin was followed by Burke and Reynolds. Both these great men were sincere mourners. Burke, when he heard of Goldsmith's death, had burst into a flood of tears. Reynolds had been so much moved by the news, that he had flung aside his brush and palette for the day.

A short time after Goldsmith's death, a little poem appeared, which will, as long as our language lasts, associate the names of his two illustrious friends with his own. It 30 has already been mentioned that he sometimes felt keenly the sarcasm which his wild blundering talk brought upon him. He was, not long before his last illness, provoked into retaliating. He wisely betook himself to his pen;



and at that weapon he proved himself a match for all his assailants together. Within a small compass he drew with a singularly easy and vigorous pencil the characters of nine or ten of his intimate associates. Though this little work did not receive his last touches, it must always be regarded as a masterpiece. It is impossible, however, not to wish that four or five likenesses which have no interest for posterity were wanting to that noble gallery, and that their places were supplied by sketches of Johnson and Gibbon, as  
 10 happy and vivid as the sketches of Burke and Garrick.

Some of Goldsmith's friends and admirers honoured him with a cenotaph in Westminster Abbey. Nollekens was the sculptor; and Johnson wrote the inscription. It is much to be lamented that Johnson did not leave to posterity a more durable and more valuable memorial of his friend. A life of Goldsmith would have been an inestimable addition to the *Lives of the Poets*. No man appreciated Goldsmith's writings more justly than Johnson: no man was better acquainted with Goldsmith's character and  
 20 habits; and no man was more competent to delineate with truth and spirit the peculiarities of a mind in which great powers were found in company with great weaknesses. But the list of poets to whose works Johnson was requested by the booksellers to furnish prefaces ended with Lyttelton, who died in 1773. The line seems to have been drawn expressly for the purpose of excluding the person whose portrait would have most fitly closed the series. Goldsmith, however, has been fortunate in his biographers. Within a few years his life has been written by Mr. Prior, by  
 30 Mr. Washington Irving, and by Mr. Forster. The diligence of Mr. Prior deserves great praise; the style of Mr. Washington Irving is always pleasing; but the highest place must, in justice, be assigned to the eminently interesting work of Mr. Forster.



## THACKERAY'S GOLDSMITH

Jeté sur cette boule,  
Laid, chétif et souffrant,  
Étouffé dans la foule,  
Faute d'être assez grand ;

Une plainte touchante  
De ma bouche sortit ;  
Le bon Dieu me dit : Chante,  
Chante, pauvre petit !

Chanter, ou je m'abuse,  
Est ma tâche ici-bas,  
Tous ceux qu'ainsi j'amuse,  
Ne m'aimeront-ils pas ?

10

In those charming lines of Béranger, one may fancy described the career, the sufferings, the genius, the gentle nature of Goldsmith, and the esteem in which we hold him. Who, of the millions whom he has amused, does not love him? To be the most beloved of English writers, what a title that is for a man!<sup>1</sup> A wild youth, wayward, but full of tenderness and affection, quits the country village where his

<sup>1</sup> 'He was a friend to virtue, and in his most playful pages never forgets what is due to it. A gentleness, delicacy, and purity of feeling distinguishes whatever he wrote, and bears a correspondence to the generosity of a disposition which knew no bounds but his last guinea....'

'The admirable ease and grace of the narrative, as well as the pleasing truth with which the principal characters are designed, make the *Vicar of Wakefield* one of the most delicious morsels of fictitious composition on which the human mind was ever employed.

'... We read the *Vicar of Wakefield* in youth and in age—we return to it again and again, and bless the memory of an author who contrives so well to reconcile us to human nature.'—SIR WALTER SCOTT. [*Life of Goldsmith*, pp. 279 sqq.] See above, pp. 16-18.



boyhood has been passed in happy musing, in idle shelter, in fond longing to see the great world out of doors, and achieve name and fortune—and after years of dire struggle, and neglect and poverty, his heart turning back as fondly to his native place, as it had longed eagerly for change when sheltered there, he writes a book and a poem, full of the recollections and feelings of home—he paints the friends and scenes of his youth, and peoples Auburn and Wakefield with remembrances of Lissoy. Wander he must, but he  
 10 carries away a home-relic with him, and dies with it on his breast. His nature is truant; in repose it longs for change: as on the journey it looks back for friends and quiet. He passes to-day in building an air-castle for to-morrow, or in writing yesterday's elegy; and he would fly away this hour, but that a cage and necessity keep him. What is the charm of his verse, of his style, and humour? His sweet regrets, his delicate compassion, his soft smile, his tremulous sympathy, the weakness which he owns? Your love for him is half pity. You come hot and tired from the day's battle,  
 20 and this sweet minstrel sings to you. Who could harm the kind vagrant harper? Whom did he ever hurt? He carries no weapon—save the harp on which he plays to you; and with which he delights great and humble, young and old, the captains in the tents, or the soldiers round the fire, or the women and children in the villages, at whose porches he stops and sings his simple songs of love and beauty. With that sweet story of the *Vicar of Wakefield*,<sup>1</sup> he has

<sup>1</sup> 'Now Herder came,' says Goethe in his Autobiography, relating his first acquaintance with Goldsmith's masterpiece, 'and together with  
 30 his great knowledge brought many other aids, and the later publications besides. Among these he announced to us the *Vicar of Wakefield* as an excellent work, with the German translation of which he would make us acquainted by reading it aloud to us himself. . . .

'A Protestant country clergyman is perhaps the most beautiful subject for a modern idyl; he appears like Melchizedek, as priest and



found entry into every castle and every hamlet. Not one of us, however busy or hard, but once or twice in our lives has passed an evening with him, and undergone the charm of his delightful music.

king in one person. To the most innocent situation which can be imagined on earth, to that of a husbandman, he is, for the most part, united by similarity of occupation as well as by equality in family relationships ; he is a father, a master of a family, an agriculturist, and thus perfectly a member of the community. On this pure, beautiful, earthly foundation rests his higher calling ; to him is it 10 given to guide men through life, to take care of their spiritual education, to bless them at all the leading epochs of their existence, to instruct, to strengthen, to console them, and if consolation is not sufficient for the present, to call up and guarantee the hope of a happier future. Imagine such a man with pure human sentiments, strong enough not to deviate from them under any circumstances, and by this already elevated above the multitude of whom one cannot expect purity and firmness ; give him the learning necessary for his office, as well as a cheerful, equable activity, which is even passionate, as it neglects no moment to do good—and you will have him well endowed. But at 20 the same time add the necessary limitation, so that he must not only pause in a small circle, but may also, perchance, pass over to a smaller ; grant him good nature, placability, resolution, and everything else praiseworthy that springs from a decided character, and over all this a cheerful spirit of compliance, and a smiling toleration of his own failings and those of others,—then you will have put together pretty well the image of our excellent Wakefield.

‘The delineation of this character on his course of life through joys and sorrows, the ever-increasing interest of the story, by the combination of the entirely natural with the strange and the singular, make 30 this novel one of the best which has ever been written ; besides this, it has the great advantage that it is quite moral, nay, in a pure sense, Christian—represents the reward of a goodwill and perseverance in the right, strengthens an unconditional confidence in God, and attests the final triumph of good over evil ; and all this without a trace of cant or pedantry. The author was preserved from both of these by an elevation of mind that shows itself throughout in the form of irony, by which this little work must appear to us as wise as it is amiable. The author, Dr. Goldsmith, has, without question, great insight into the moral world, into its strength and its infirmities ; but at the 40 same time he can thankfully acknowledge that he is an Englishman,



Goldsmith's father was no doubt the good Doctor Primrose, whom we all of us know.<sup>1</sup> Swift was yet alive, when the

and reckon highly the advantages which his country and his nation afford him. The family, with the delineation of which he occupies himself, stands upon one of the last steps of citizen comfort, and yet comes in contact with the highest ; its narrow circle, which becomes still more contracted, touches upon the great world through the natural and civil course of things ; this little skiff floats on the agitated waves of English life, and in weal or woe it has to expect injury or  
10 help from the vast fleet which sails around it.

'I may suppose that my readers know this work, and have it in memory ; whoever hears it named for the first time here, as well as he who is induced to read it again, will thank me.'—GOETHE, *Truth and Poetry ; from my own Life* (English translation, vol. i, pp. 368-70). [Bohn's edition.]

'He seems from infancy to have been compounded of two natures, one bright, the other blundering ; or to have had fairy gifts laid in his cradle by the 'good people' who haunted his birthplace, the old goblin mansion, on the banks of the Inny.

20 'He carries with him the wayward elfin spirit, if we may so term it, throughout his career. His fairy gifts are of no avail at school, academy, or college ; they unfit him for close study and practical science, and render him heedless of everything that does not address itself to his poetical imagination, and genial and festive feelings ; they dispose him to break away from restraint, to stroll about hedges, green lanes, and haunted streams, to revel with jovial companions, or to rove the country like a gipsy in quest of odd adventures. . . .

'Though his circumstances often compelled him to associate with the poor, they never could betray him into companionship with the  
30 depraved. His relish for humour, and for the study of character, as we have before observed, brought him often into convivial company of a vulgar kind ; but he discriminated between their vulgarity and their amusing qualities, or rather wrought from the whole those familiar pictures of life which form the staple of his most popular writings.'—WASHINGTON IRVING. [*Goldsmith*, chap. 45 (revised edn.)]

<sup>1</sup> 'The family of Goldsmith, Goldsmyth, or, as it was occasionally written, Gouldsmith, is of considerable standing in Ireland, and seems always to have held a respectable station in society. Its origin is English, supposed to be derived from that which was long settled at  
40 Crayford in Kent.'—PRIOR'S *Life of Goldsmith*. [Chap. I.]

Oliver's father, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather were clergymen ; and two of them married clergymen's daughters.



little Oliver was born at Pallas, or Pallasmore, in the county of Longford, in Ireland. In 1730, two years after the child's birth, Charles Goldsmith removed his family to Lissoy, in the county Westmeath, that sweet 'Auburn' which every person who hears me has seen in fancy. Here the kind parson<sup>1</sup> brought up his eight children; and loving all the world, as his son says, fancied all the world loved him. He had a crowd of poor dependants besides those hungry children. He kept an open table; round which sat flatterers and poor friends, who laughed at the honest rector's 10 many jokes and ate the produce of his seventy acres of farm. Those who have seen an Irish house in the present day can fancy that one of Lissoy. The old beggar still has his allotted corner by the kitchen turf; the maimed old soldier still gets his potatoes and butter-milk; the poor cottier still asks his honour's charity, and prays God bless his Reverence for the sixpence; the ragged pensioner still takes his place by right and sufferance. There's still a crowd in the kitchen, and a crowd round the parlour-table, profusion, confusion, kindness,

- <sup>1</sup> At church, with meek and unaffected grace,  
 His looks adorn'd the venerable place;  
 Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,  
 And fools who came to scoff remain'd to pray.  
 The service past, around the pious man  
 With steady zeal each honest rustic ran;  
 E'en children follow'd with endearing wile,  
 And pluck'd his gown to share the good man's smile.  
 His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest,  
 Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distrest;  
 To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,  
 But all his serious thoughts had rest in Heaven.  
 As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
 Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,  
 Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
 Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

20

30



poverty. If an Irishman comes to London to make his fortune, he has a half-dozen of Irish dependants who take a percentage of his earnings. The good Charles Goldsmith<sup>1</sup> left but little provision for his hungry race when death summoned him: and, one of his daughters being engaged to a squire of rather superior dignity, Charles Goldsmith impoverished the rest of his family to provide the girl with a dowry.

The small-pox, which scourged all Europe at that time, 10 and ravaged the roses off the cheeks of half the world, fell foul of poor little Oliver's face, when the child was eight years old, and left him scarred and disfigured for his life. An old woman in his father's village taught him his letters, and pronounced him a dunce: Paddy Byrne, the hedge-schoolmaster, took him in hand; and from Paddy Byrne, he was transmitted to a clergyman at Elphin. When a child was sent to school in those days, the classic phrase

<sup>1</sup> 'In May this year (1768), he lost his brother, the Rev. Henry Goldsmith, for whom he had been unable to obtain preferment in the 20 Church. . . .

'To the curacy of Kilkenny West, the moderate stipend of which, forty pounds a year, is sufficiently celebrated by his brother's lines, it has been stated that Mr. Goldsmith added a school, which, after having been held at more than one place in the vicinity, was finally fixed at Lissoy. Here his talents and industry gave it celebrity, and under his care the sons of many of the neighbouring gentry received their education. A fever breaking out among the boys about 1765, they dispersed for a time; but reassembling at Athlone, he continued his scholastic labours there until the time of his death, which 30 happened, like that of his brother, about the forty-fifth year of his age. He was a man of an excellent heart and amiable disposition.'—PRIOR'S *Goldsmith*. [Chap. XVII.]

Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,  
My heart, untravell'd, fondly turns to thee:  
Still to my brother turns with ceaseless pain,  
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain.

*The Traveller*. [7 sqq.]



was that he was placed under Mr. So-and-so's *ferule*. Poor little ancestors! It is hard to think how ruthlessly you were birched; and how much of needless whipping and tears our small forefathers had to undergo! A relative, kind Uncle Contarine, took the main charge of little Noll; who went through his school-days righteously doing as little work as he could: robbing orchards, playing at ball, and making his pocket-money fly about whenever fortune sent it to him. Everybody knows the story of that famous 'Mistake of a Night', when the young schoolboy, provided 10 with a guinea and a nag, rode up to the 'best house' in Ardagh, called for the landlord's company over a bottle of wine at supper, and for a hot cake for breakfast in the morning; and found, when he asked for the bill, that the best house was Squire Featherstone's, and not the inn for which he mistook it. Who does not know every story about Goldsmith? That is a delightful and fantastic picture of the child dancing and capering about in the kitchen at home, when the old fiddler gibed at him for his ugliness—and called him Aesop, and little Noll made his 20 repartee of 'Heralds proclaim aloud this saying—See Aesop dancing and his monkey playing.' One can fancy the queer pitiful look of humour and appeal upon that little scarred face—the funny little dancing figure, the funny little brogue. In his life, and his writings, which are the honest expression of it, he is constantly bewailing that homely face and person; anon he surveys them in the glass ruefully; and presently assumes the most comical dignity. He likes to deck out his little person in splendour and fine colours. He presented himself to be examined for ordination 30 in a pair of scarlet breeches, and said honestly that he did not like to go into the Church, because he was fond of coloured clothes. When he tried to practise as a doctor, he got by hook or by crook a black velvet suit, and looked as



big and grand as he could, and kept his hat over a patch on the old coat: in better days he bloomed out in plum-colour, in blue silk, and in new velvet. For some of those splendours the heirs of Mr. Filby, the tailor, have never been paid to this day; perhaps the kind tailor and his creditor have met and settled the little account in Hades.<sup>1</sup>

They showed until lately a window at Trinity College, Dublin, on which the name of O. Goldsmith was engraved with a diamond. Whose diamond was it? Not the young sizar's, who made but a poor figure in that place of learning. He was idle, penniless, and fond of pleasure:<sup>2</sup> he learned his way early to the pawnbroker's shop. He wrote ballads, they say, for the street-singers, who paid him a crown for a poem: and his pleasure was to steal out at night and hear his verses sung. He was chastised by his tutor for giving a dance in his rooms, and took the box on the ear so much to heart, that he packed up his all, pawned his books and little property, and disappeared from college and family. He said he intended to go to America, but when his money was spent, the young prodigal came home ruefully, and the good folks there killed their calf—it was but a lean one—and welcomed him back.

After college, he hung about his mother's house, and lived for some years the life of a buckeen—passed a month with this relation and that, a year with one patron, a great deal of time at the public-house.<sup>3</sup> Tired of this life, it was

<sup>1</sup> 'When Goldsmith died, half the unpaid bill he owed to Mr. William Filby (amounting in all to 79*l.*) was for clothes supplied to this nephew Hodson.'—FORSTER'S *Goldsmith*, p. 520. [1848.]

<sup>2</sup> As this nephew Hodson ended his days (see the same page) 'a prosperous Irish gentleman', it is not unreasonable to wish that he had cleared off Mr. Filby's bill.

<sup>3</sup> 'Poor fellow! He hardly knew an ass from a mule, nor a turkey from a goose, but when he saw it on the table.'—CUMBERLAND'S *Memoirs*. [Vol. I, p. 352 (1807).]

<sup>4</sup> 'These youthful follies, like the fermentation of liquors, often



resolved that he should go to London, and study at the Temple ; but he got no farther on the road to London and the woolsack than Dublin, where he gambled away the fifty pounds given him for his outfit, and whence he returned to the indefatigable forgiveness of home. Then he determined to be a doctor, and Uncle Contarine helped him to a couple of years at Edinburgh. Then from Edinburgh he felt that he ought to hear the famous professors of Leyden and Paris, and wrote most amusing pompous letters to his uncle about the great Farheim, Du Petit, and Duhamel du 10 Monceau, whose lectures he proposed to follow. If Uncle Contarine believed those letters—if Oliver's mother believed that story which the youth related of his going to Cork, with the purpose of embarking for America, of his having paid his passage-money, and having sent his kit on board ; of the anonymous captain sailing away with Oliver's valuable luggage in a nameless ship, never to return ; if Uncle Contarine and the mother at Ballymahon believed his stories, they must have been a very simple pair ; as it was a very simple rogue indeed who cheated them. When the lad, 20 after failing in his clerical examination, after failing in his plan for studying the law, took leave of these projects and of his parents, and set out for Edinburgh, he saw mother, and uncle, and lazy Ballymahon, and green native turf, and sparkling river for the last time. He was never to look on old Ireland more, and only in fancy revisit her.

But me, not destined such delights to share,  
My prime of life in wandering spent and care,

disturb the mind only in order to its future refinement : a life spent in phlegmatic apathy resembles those liquors which never ferment and 30 are consequently always muddy.'—GOLDSMITH, *Memoir of Voltaire*.

'He (Johnson) said Goldsmith was a plant that flowered late. There appeared nothing remarkable about him when he was young.'—BOSWELL. [*Life of Johnson*, anno 1777.]



Impelled, with steps unceasing, to pursue  
 Some fleeting good that mocks me with the view,  
 That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,  
 Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;  
 My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,  
 And find no spot of all the world my own.

I spoke in a former lecture of that high courage which enabled Fielding, in spite of disease, remorse, and poverty, always to retain a cheerful spirit and to keep his manly bene-  
 10 volence and love of truth intact, as if these treasures had been confided to him for the public benefit, and he was accountable to posterity for their honourable employ; and a constancy equally happy and admirable I think was shown by Goldsmith, whose sweet and friendly nature bloomed kindly always in the midst of a life's storm, and rain, and bitter weather.<sup>1</sup> The poor fellow was never so friendless but he could befriend some one; never so pinched and wretched but he could give of his crust, and speak his word of compassion. If he had but his flute left, he could give that, and make the children  
 20 happy in the dreary London court. He could give the coals in that queer coal-scuttle we read of to his poor neighbour: he could give away his blankets in college to the poor widow, and warm himself as he best might in the feathers: he could pawn his coat to save his landlord from gaol: when he was a school-usher, he spent his earnings in treats for the boys, and the good-natured schoolmaster's wife said justly that she ought to keep Mr. Goldsmith's

<sup>1</sup> 'An "inspired idiot", Goldsmith, hangs strangely about him [Johnson] . . . Yet, on the whole, there is no evil in the "gooseberry-  
 30 fool", but rather much good; of a finer, if of a weaker sort than Johnson's; and all the more genuine that he himself could never become conscious of it, though unhappily never cease attempting to become so: the author of the genuine *Vicar of Wakefield*, nill he will he, must needs fly towards such a mass of genuine manhood.'—CARLYLE'S *Essays* (2nd ed.), vol. iv, p. 91. [On Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.]



money as well as the young gentlemen's. When he met his pupils in later life, nothing would satisfy the Doctor but he must treat them still. 'Have you seen the print of me after Sir Joshua Reynolds?' he asked of one of his old pupils. 'Not seen it? not bought it? Sure, Jack, if your picture had been published, I'd not have been without it half an hour.' His purse and his heart were everybody's and his friends' as much as his own. When he was at the height of reputation, and the Earl of Northumberland, going as Lord Lieutenant to Ireland, asked if he could be of any service to Dr. Goldsmith, Goldsmith recommended his brother, and not himself, to the great man. 'My patrons,' he gallantly said, 'are the booksellers, and I want no others.'<sup>1</sup> Hard patrons they were, and hard work he did; but he did not complain much: if in his early writings some bitter words escaped him, some allusions to neglect and poverty, he withdrew these expressions when his works were republished, and better days seemed to open for him; and he did not care to complain that printer or publisher had

<sup>1</sup> 'At present, the few poets of England no longer depend on the great for subsistence; they have now no other patrons but the public, and the public, collectively considered, is a good and a generous master. It is indeed too frequently mistaken as to the merits of every candidate for favour; but to make amends, it is never mistaken long. A performance indeed may be forced for a time into reputation, but, destitute of real merit, it soon sinks; time, the touchstone of what is truly valuable, will soon discover the fraud, and an author should never arrogate to himself any share of success till his works have been read at least ten years with satisfaction.

'A man of letters at present, whose works are valuable, is perfectly sensible of their value. Every polite member of the community, by buying what he writes, contributes to reward him. The ridicule, therefore, of living in a garret might have been wit in the last age, but continues such no longer, because no longer true. A writer of real merit now may easily be rich, if his heart be set only on fortune: and for those who have no merit, it is but fit that such should remain in merited obscurity.'—GOLDSMITH, *Citizen of the World*, Let. 84.



overlooked his merit, or left him poor. The Court face was turned from honest Oliver, the Court patronized Beattie; the fashion did not shine on him—fashion adored Sterne.<sup>1</sup> Fashion pronounced Kelly to be the great writer of comedy of his day. A little—not ill humour, but plaintiveness—a little betrayal of wounded pride which he showed render him not the less amiable. The author of *The Vicar of Wakefield* had a right to protest when Newbery kept back the MS. for two years; had a right to be a little peevish  
 10 with Sterne; a little angry when Colman's actors declined their parts in his delightful comedy, when the manager refused to have a scene painted for it, and pronounced its damnation before hearing. He had not the great public with him; but he had the noble Johnson, and the admirable Reynolds, and the great Gibbon, and the

<sup>1</sup> Goldsmith attacked Sterne, obviously enough, censuring his indecency, and slighting his wit, and ridiculing his manner, in the 53rd letter in *The Citizen of the World*.

‘As in common conversation,’ says he, ‘the best way to make the  
 20 audience laugh is by first laughing yourself; so in writing, the properest manner is to show an attempt at humour, which will pass upon most for humour in reality. To effect this, readers must be treated with the most perfect familiarity; in one page the author is to make them a low bow, and in the next to pull them by the nose; he must talk in riddles, and then send them to bed in order to dream for the solution,’ &c.

Sterne's humorous *mot* on the subject of the gravest part of the charges, then, as now, made against him, may perhaps be quoted here, from the excellent, the respectable Sir Walter Scott.

30 ‘Soon after *Tristram* had appeared, Sterne asked a Yorkshire lady of fortune and condition, whether she had read his book. “I have not, Mr. Sterne,” was the answer; “and to be plain with you, I am informed it is not proper for female perusal.” “My dear good lady,” replied the author, “do not be gulled by such stories; the book is like your young heir there” (pointing to a child of three years old, who was rolling on the carpet in his white tunics): ‘he shows at times a great deal that is usually concealed, but it is all in perfect innocence.’” [SCOTT, *Life of Sterne*, p. 323 (1827).]



great Burke, and the great Fox—friends and admirers illustrious indeed, as famous as those who, fifty years before, sat round Pope's table.

Nobody knows, and I dare say Goldsmith's buoyant temper kept no account of all the pains which he endured during the early period of his literary career. Should any man of letters in our day have to bear up against such, Heaven grant he may come out of the period of misfortune with such a pure kind heart as that which Goldsmith obstinately bore in his breast. The insults to which he had 10 to submit are shocking to read of—slander, contumely, vulgar satire, brutal malignity perverting his commonest motives and actions: he had his share of these, and one's anger is roused at reading of them, as it is at seeing a woman insulted or a child assaulted, at the notion that a creature so very gentle and weak, and full of love, should have had to suffer so. And he had worse than insult to undergo—to own to fault, and deprecate the anger of ruffians. There is a letter of his extant to one Griffiths, a bookseller, in which poor Goldsmith is forced to confess that certain 20 books sent by Griffiths are in the hands of a friend from whom Goldsmith had been forced to borrow money. 'He was wild, sir,' Johnson said, speaking of Goldsmith to Boswell, with his great, wise benevolence and noble mercifulness of heart, 'Dr. Goldsmith was wild, sir; but he is so no more.' Ah! if we pity the good and weak man who suffers undeservedly, let us deal very gently with him from whom misery extorts not only tears, but shame; let us think humbly and charitably of the human nature that suffers so sadly and falls so low. Whose turn may it be to-morrow? 30 What weak heart, confident before trial, may not succumb under temptation invincible? Cover the good man who has been vanquished—cover his face and pass on.

For the last half-dozen years of his life, Goldsmith was



far removed from the pressure of any ignoble necessity ; and in the receipt, indeed, of a pretty large income from the booksellers, his patrons. Had he lived but a few years more, his public fame would have been as great as his private reputation, and he might have enjoyed alive a part of that esteem which his country has ever since paid to the vivid and versatile genius who has touched on almost every subject of literature, and touched nothing that he did not adorn. Except in rare instances, a man is known in our  
 10 profession, and esteemed as a skilful workman, years before the lucky hit which trebles his usual gains, and stamps him a popular author. In the strength of his age, and the dawn of his reputation, having for backers and friends the most illustrious literary men of his time,<sup>1</sup> fame and prosperity might have been in store for Goldsmith, had fate so willed ; and, at forty-six, had not sudden disease carried him off. I say prosperity rather than competence, for it is probable that no sum could have put order into his affairs or sufficed for his irreclaimable habits of dissipation. It must be  
 20 remembered that he owed 2,000*l.* when he died. ‘ Was ever poet,’ Johnson asked, ‘ so trusted before ? ’ As has been the case with many another good fellow of his nation, his life was tracked and his substance wasted by crowds of hungry beggars and lazy dependants. If they came at a lucky time (and be sure they knew his affairs better than he

<sup>1</sup> ‘ Goldsmith told us that he was now busy in writing a Natural History ; and that he might have full leisure for it, he had taken lodgings at a farmer’s house, near to the six-mile stone on the Edgware Road, and had carried down his books in two returned post-chaises.  
 30 He said he believed the farmer’s family thought him an odd character, similar to that in which the *Spectator* appeared to his landlady and her children ; he was *The Gentleman*. Mr. Mickle, the translator of the *Lusiad*, and I, went to visit him at this place a few days afterwards. He was not at home ; but having a curiosity to see his apartment, we went in, and found curious scraps of descriptions of animals scrawled upon the wall with a blacklead pencil.’—BOSWELL. [anno 1772.]



did himself, and watched his pay-day), he gave them of his money: if they begged on empty-purse days he gave them his promissory bills: or he treated them to a tavern where he had credit; or he obliged them with an order upon honest Mr. Filby for coats, for which he paid as long as he could earn, and until the shears of Filby were to cut for him no more. Staggering under a load of debt and labour, tracked by bailiffs and reproachful creditors, running from a hundred poor dependants, whose appealing looks were perhaps the hardest of all pains for him to bear, devising fevered 10 plans for the morrow, new histories, new comedies, all sorts of new literary schemes, flying from all these into seclusion, and out of seclusion into pleasure—at last, at five-and-forty, death seized him and closed his career.<sup>1</sup> I have been many a time in the chambers in the Temple which were his, and passed up the staircase, which Johnson, and Burke, and Reynolds trod to see their friend, their poet, their kind Goldsmith—the stair on which the poor women sat weeping bitterly when they heard that the greatest and most generous of all men was dead within the black oak door.<sup>2</sup> 20

<sup>1</sup> 'When Goldsmith was dying, Dr. Turton said to him, "Your pulse is in greater disorder than it should be, from the degree of fever which you have; is your mind at ease?" Goldsmith answered it was not.'—DR. JOHNSON (*in Boswell*). [anno 1777.]

'Chambers, you find, is gone far, and poor Goldsmith is gone much farther. He died of a fever, exasperated, as I believe, by the fear of distress. He had raised money and squandered it, by every artifice of acquisition and folly of expense. But let not his failings be remembered; he was a very great man.'—DR. JOHNSON (*in Boswell*, July 5th, 1774).

<sup>2</sup> 'When Burke was told [of Goldsmith's death] he burst into tears. 30 Reynolds was in his painting-room when the messenger went to him; but at once he laid his pencil aside, which in times of great family distress he had not been known to do, left his painting-room, and did not re-enter it that day. . .

'The staircase of Brick Court is said to have been filled with mourners, the reverse of domestic; women without a home, without domesticity of any kind, with no friend but him they had come to



Ah, it was a different lot from that for which the poor fellow sighed, when he wrote with heart yearning for home those most charming of all fond verses, in which he fancies he revisits 'Auburn'—

Here, as I take my solitary rounds  
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,  
And, many a year elapsed, return to view  
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,  
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,  
10 Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,  
In all my griefs—and God has given my share,  
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,  
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;  
To husband out life's taper at the close,  
And keep the flame from wasting by repose;  
I still had hopes—for pride attends us still—  
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill,  
Around my fire an evening group to draw,  
20 And tell of all I felt and all I saw;  
And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,  
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew—  
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,  
Here to return, and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline!  
Retreats from care that never must be mine—  
How happy he who crowns in shades like these  
A youth of labour with an age of ease;  
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,  
30 And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!

weep for ; outcasts of that great, solitary, wicked city, to whom he had never forgotten to be kind and charitable. And he had domestic mourners, too. His coffin was reopened at the request of Miss Horneck and her sister (such was the regard he was known to have for them) that a lock might be cut from his hair. It was in Mrs. Gwyn's possession when she died, after nearly seventy years.'—FORSTER'S *Goldsmith*. [pp. 688 sqq. (1848).]



For him no wretches born to work and weep  
 Explore the mine or tempt the dangerous deep;  
 No surly porter stands in guilty state  
 To spurn imploring famine from the gate:  
 But on he moves to meet his latter end,  
 Angels around befriending virtue's friend;  
 Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,  
 While resignation gently slopes the way;  
 And, all his prospects brightening to the last,  
 His heaven commences ere the world be past.

10

In these verses, I need not say with what melody, with what touching truth, with what exquisite beauty of comparison—as indeed in hundreds more pages of the writings of this honest soul—the whole character of the man is told—his humble confession of faults and weakness; his pleasant little vanity, and desire that his village should admire him; his simple scheme of good in which everybody was to be happy—no beggar was to be refused his dinner—nobody in fact was to work much, and he to be the harmless chief of the Utopia, and the monarch of the Irish Yvetot. He would 20 have told again, and without fear of their failing, those famous jokes<sup>1</sup> which had hung fire in London; he would

<sup>1</sup> ‘Goldsmith’s incessant desire of being conspicuous in company was the occasion of his sometimes appearing to such disadvantage, as one should hardly have supposed possible in a man of his genius. When his literary reputation had risen deservedly high, and his society was much courted, he became very jealous of the extraordinary attention which was everywhere paid to Johnson. One evening, in a circle of wits, he found fault with me for talking of Johnson as entitled to the honour of unquestionable superiority. “Sir,” said he, “you are for making a 30 monarchy of what should be a republic.”

‘He was still more mortified, when, talking in a company with fluent vivacity, and, as he flattered himself, to the admiration of all who were present, a German who sat next him, and perceived Johnson rolling himself as if about to speak, suddenly stopped him, saying, “Stay, stay—Toclor Shonson is going to say something.” This was no



have talked of his great friends of the Club—of my Lord Clare and my Lord Bishop, my Lord Nugent—sure he knew them intimately, and was hand and glove with some of the best men in town—and he would have spoken of Johnson and of Burke, from Cork, and of Sir Joshua who had

doubt very provoking, especially to one so irritable as Goldsmith, who frequently mentioned it with strong expressions of indignation.

‘It may also be observed that Goldsmith was sometimes content to be treated with an easy familiarity, but upon occasions would be  
10 consequential and important. An instance of this occurred in a small particular. Johnson had a way of contracting the names of his friends, as Beauclerk, Beau; Boswell, Bozzy. . . . I remember one day, when Tom Davies was telling that Dr. Johnson said—“We are all in labour for a name to *Goldy*’s play,” Goldsmith seemed displeased that such a liberty should be taken with his name, and said, “I have often desired him not to call me *Goldy*.”’ [BOSWELL, *Life*, anno 1773.]

This is one of several of Boswell’s depreciatory mentions of Goldsmith—which may well irritate biographers and admirers—and also those who take that more kindly and more profound view of Boswell’s own  
20 character, which was opened up by Mr. Carlyle’s famous article on his book. No wonder that Mr. Irving calls Boswell an ‘incarnation of toadyism’. And the worst of it is, that Johnson himself has suffered from this habit of the Laird of Auchinleck’s. People are apt to forget under what Boswellian stimulus the great Doctor uttered many hasty things:—things no more indicative of the nature of the depths of his character than the phosphoric gleaming of the sea, when struck at night, is indicative of radical corruption of nature! In truth, it is clear enough on the whole that both Johnson and Goldsmith *appreciated* each other, and that they mutually knew it. They were, as it were,  
30 tripped up and flung against each other, occasionally, by the blundering and silly gambolling of people in company.

Something must be allowed for Boswell’s ‘rivalry for Johnson’s good graces’ with Oliver (as Sir Walter Scott has remarked), for Oliver was intimate with the Doctor before his biographer was,—and as we all remember, marched off with him to ‘take tea with Mrs. Williams’ before Boswell had advanced to that honourable degree of intimacy. But, in truth, Boswell—though he perhaps showed more talent in his delineation of the Doctor than is generally ascribed to him—had not faculty to take a fair view of *two* great men at a time. Besides, as Mr.  
40 Forster justly remarks, ‘he was impatient of Goldsmith from the first hour of their acquaintance.’—[*Goldsmith*, p. 292.]



painted him—and he would have told wonderful sly stories of Ranelagh and the Pantheon, and the masquerades at Madame Cornelys'; and he would have toasted, with a sigh, the Jessamy Bride—the lovely Mary Horneck.

The figure of that charming young lady forms one of the prettiest recollections of Goldsmith's life. She and her beautiful sister, who married Bunbury, the graceful and humorous amateur artist of those days, when Gillray had but just begun to try his powers, were among the kindest and dearest of Goldsmith's many friends; cheered and pitied 10 him, travelled abroad with him, made him welcome at their home, and gave him many a pleasant holiday. He bought his finest clothes to figure at their country house at Barton—he wrote them droll verses. They loved him, laughed at him, played him tricks and made him happy. He asked for a loan from Garrick, and Garrick kindly supplied him, to enable him to go to Barton—but there were to be no more holidays, and only one brief struggle more for poor Goldsmith—a lock of his hair was taken from the coffin and given to the Jessamy Bride. She lived quite into our time. 20 Hazlitt saw her an old lady, but beautiful still, in Northcote's painting-room, who told the eager critic how proud she always was that Goldsmith had admired her. The younger Colman has left a touching reminiscence of him (vol. i, 110 [1830]).

'I was only five years old,' he says, 'when Goldsmith took me on his knee while he was drinking coffee one evening with my father, and began to play with me, which amiable act I returned, with the ingratitude of a peevish brat, by giving him a very smart slap in the face: it must have been a 30 tingler, for it left the marks of my little spiteful paw upon his cheek. This infantile outrage was followed by summary justice, and I was locked up by my indignant father in an adjoining room to undergo solitary imprisonment in the



dark. Here I began to howl and scream most abominably, which was no bad step towards liberation, since those who were not inclined to pity me might be likely to set me free for the purpose of abating a nuisance.

‘ At length a generous friend appeared to extricate me from jeopardy, and that generous friend was no other than the man I had so wantonly molested by assault and battery—it was the tender-hearted Doctor himself, with a lighted candle in his hand, and a smile upon his countenance, which  
10 was still partially red from the effects of my petulance. I sulked and sobbed and he fondled and soothed, till I began to brighten. Goldsmith . . . seized the propitious moment of returning good humour, so he put down the candle and began to conjure. He placed three hats, which happened to be in the room, upon the carpet, and a shilling under each. The shillings he told me were England, France, and Spain. “ Hey presto cockalorum ! ” cried the Doctor, and lo, on uncovering the shillings, which had been dispersed, each beneath a separate hat, they were all found  
20 congregated under one. I was no politician at five years old, and therefore might not have wondered at the sudden revolution which brought England, France, and Spain all under one crown ; but, as I was also no conjurer, it amazed me beyond measure. . . . From that time, whenever the Doctor came to visit my father, “ I plucked his gown to share the good man’s smile ” ; a game at romps constantly ensued, and we were always cordial friends and merry playfellows. Our unequal companionship varied somewhat in point of sports as I grew older ; but it did not last long :  
30 my senior playmate died alas ! in his forty-fifth year, some months after I had attained my eleventh. . . . In all the numerous accounts of his virtues and his foibles, his genius and absurdities, his knowledge of nature and his ignorance of the world, his “ compassion for another’s woe ” was



always predominant; and my trivial story of his humouring a froward child weighs but as a feather in the recorded scale of his benevolence.'

Think of him reckless, thriftless, vain if you like—but merciful, gentle, generous, full of love and pity. He passes out of our life, and goes to render his account beyond it. Think of the poor pensioners weeping at his grave; think of the noble spirits that admired and deplored him; think of the righteous pen that wrote his epitaph—and of the wonderful and unanimous response of affection with which 10 the world has paid back the love he gave it. His humour delighting us still: his song fresh and beautiful as when first he charmed with it: his words in all our mouths: his very weaknesses beloved and familiar—his benevolent spirit seems still to smile upon us: to do gentle kindnesses: to succour with sweet charity: to soothe, caress, and forgive: to plead with the fortunate for the unhappy and the poor.

His name is the last in the list of those men of humour who have formed the themes of the discourses which you have heard so kindly. Long before I had ever hoped for 20 such an audience, or dreamed of the possibility of the good fortune which has brought me so many friends, I was at issue with some of my literary brethren upon a point—which they held from tradition I think rather than experience—that our profession was neglected in this country; and that men of letters were ill-received and held in slight esteem. It would hardly be grateful of me now to alter my old opinion that we do meet with goodwill and kindness, with generous helping hands in the time of our necessity, with cordial and friendly recognition. What 30 claim had any one of these of whom I have been speaking, but genius? What return of gratitude, fame, affection, did it not bring to all? What punishment befell those who were unfortunate among them, but that which follows reckless



habits and careless lives ? For these faults a wit must suffer like the dullest prodigal that ever ran in debt. He must pay the tailor if he wears the coat ; his children must go in rags if he spends his money at the tavern ; he can't come to London and be made Lord Chancellor if he stops on the road and gambles away his last shilling at Dublin. And he must pay the social penalty of these follies too, and expect that the world will shun the man of bad habits, that women will avoid the man of loose life, that prudent folks will  
10 close their doors as a precaution, and before a demand shall be made on their pockets by the needy prodigal. With what difficulty had any one of these men to contend, save that eternal and mechanical one of want of means and lack of capital, and of which thousands of young lawyers, young doctors, young soldiers and sailors, of inventors, manufacturers, shopkeepers, have to complain ? Hearts as brave and resolute as ever beat in the breast of any wit or poet, sicken and break daily in the vain endeavour and unavailing struggle against life's difficulty. Don't we see daily ruined  
20 inventors, grey-haired midshipmen, balked heroes, blighted curates, barristers pining a hungry life out in chambers, the attorneys never mounting to their garrets, whilst scores of them are rapping at the door of the successful quack below ? If these suffer, who is the author, that he should be exempt ? Let us bear our ills with the same constancy with which others endure them, accept our manly part in life, hold our own, and ask no more. I can conceive of no kings or laws causing or curing Goldsmith's improvidence, or Fielding's fatal love of pleasure, or Dick Steele's mania for running  
30 races with the constable. You never can outrun that surefooted officer—not by any swiftness or by dodges devised by any genius, however great ; and he carries off the Tatler to the spunging-house, or taps the Citizen of the World on the shoulder as he would any other mortal.



Does society look down on a man because he is an author? I suppose if people want a buffoon they tolerate him only in so far as he is amusing; it can hardly be expected that they should respect him as an equal. Is there to be a guard of honour provided for the author of the last new novel or poem? how long is he to reign, and keep other potentates out of possession? He retires, grumbles, and prints a lamentation that literature is despised. If Captain A. is left out of Lady B.'s parties he does not state that the army is despised: if Lord C. no longer asks Counsellor D. to dinner, Counsellor D. does not announce that the Bar is insulted. He is not fair to society if he enters it with this suspicion hankering about him; if he is doubtful about his reception, how hold up his head honestly, and look frankly in the face that world about which he is full of suspicion? Is he place-hunting, and thinking in his mind that he ought to be made an Ambassador, like Prior, or a Secretary of State, like Addison? his pretence of equality falls to the ground at once: he is scheming for a patron, not shaking the hand of a friend, when he meets the world. Treat such a man as he deserves; laugh at his buffoonery, and give him a dinner and a *bon jour*; laugh at his self-sufficiency and absurd assumptions of superiority, and his equally ludicrous airs of martyrdom: laugh at his flattery and his scheming, and buy it, if it's worth the having. Let the wag have his dinner and the hireling his pay, if you want him, and make a profound bow to the *grand homme incompris*, and the boisterous martyr, and show him the door. The great world, the great aggregate experience, has its good sense, as it has its good humour. It detects a pretender, as it trusts a loyal heart. It is kind in the main: how should it be otherwise than kind, when it is so wise and clear-headed? To any literary man who says, 'It despises my profession,' I say, with all my might—no, no, no. It may pass over



your individual case—how many a brave fellow has failed in the race, and perished unknown in the struggle!—but it treats you as you merit in the main. If you serve it, it is not unthankful; if you please it, it is pleased; if you cringe to it, it detects you, and scorns you if you are mean; it returns your cheerfulness with its good humour; it deals not ungenerously with your weaknesses; it recognizes most kindly your merits; it gives you a fair place and fair play.

To any one of those men of whom we have spoken was it in  
10 the main ungrateful? A king might refuse Goldsmith a pension, as a publisher might keep his masterpiece and the delight of all the world in his desk for two years; but it was mistake, and not ill will. Noble and illustrious names of Swift, and Pope, and Addison! dear and honoured memories of Goldsmith and Fielding! kind friends, teachers, benefactors! who shall say that our country, which continues to bring you such an unceasing tribute of applause, admiration, love, sympathy, does not do honour to the literary calling in the honour which it bestows upon *you*!



# THE TRAVELLER

OR,

## A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY

REMOTE, unfriended, melancholy, slow,  
Or by the lazy Scheldt, or wandering Po ;  
Or onward, where the rude Carinthian boor  
Against the houseless stranger shuts the door ;  
Or where Campania's plain forsaken lies,  
A weary waste expanding to the skies :  
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,  
My heart untravell'd fondly turns to thee ;  
Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,  
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain. 10

Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,  
And round his dwelling guardian saints attend :  
Bless'd be that spot, where cheerful guests retire  
To pause from toil, and trim their ev'ning fire ;  
Bless'd that abode, where want and pain repair,  
And every stranger finds a ready chair ;  
Bless'd be those feasts with simple plenty crown'd,  
Where all the ruddy family around  
Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,  
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale, 20  
Or press the bashful stranger to his food,  
And learn the luxury of doing good.

But me, not destin'd such delights to share,  
My prime of life in wand'ring spent and care,



Impell'd, with steps unceasing, to pursue  
Some fleeting good, that mocks me with the view;  
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,  
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;  
My fortune leads to travel realms alone,  
And find no spot of all the world my own.

30

Even now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,  
I sit me down a pensive hour to spend;  
And, plac'd on high above the storm's career,  
Look downward where an hundred realms appear;  
Lakes, forests, cities, plains, extending wide,  
The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.

When thus Creation's charms around combine,  
Amidst the store, should thankless pride repine?  
Say, should the philosophic mind disdain  
That good which makes each humbler bosom vain? 40  
Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,  
These little things are great to little man;  
And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind  
Exults in all the good of all mankind.  
Ye glitt'ring towns, with wealth and splendour crown'd,  
Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round,  
Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale,  
Ye bending swains, that dress the flow'ry vale,  
For me your tributary stores combine;  
Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine! 50

As some lone miser visiting his store,  
Bends at his treasure, counts, re-counts it o'er;  
Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,  
Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting still:  
Thus to my breast alternate passions rise,  
Pleas'd with each good that Heaven to man supplies:



Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall,  
 To see the hoard of human bliss so small;  
 And oft I wish, amidst the scene, to find  
 Some spot to real happiness consign'd, 60  
 Where my worn soul, each wand'ring hope at rest,  
 May gather bliss to see my fellows bless'd.

But where to find that happiest spot below,  
 Who can direct, when all pretend to know?  
 The shudd'ring tenant of the frigid zone  
 Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own,  
 Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,  
 And his long nights of revelry and ease;  
 The naked negro, panting at the line,  
 Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine, 70  
 Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,  
 And thanks his Gods for all the good they gave.  
 Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,  
 His first, best country ever is at home.  
 And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare,  
 And estimate the blessings which they share,  
 Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find  
 An equal portion dealt to all mankind,  
 As different good, by Art or Nature given,  
 To different nations makes their blessings even. 80

Nature, a mother kind alike to all,  
 Still grants her bliss at Labour's earnest call;  
 With food as well the peasant is supplied  
 On Idra's cliffs as Arno's shelvy side;  
 And though the rocky crested summits frown,  
 These rocks, by custom, turn to beds of down.  
 From Art more various are the blessings sent;  
 Wealth, commerce, honour, liberty, content.



Yet these each other's power so strong contest,  
That either seems destructive of the rest. 90  
Where wealth and freedom reign contentment fails,  
And honour sinks where commerce long prevails.  
Hence every state, to one lov'd blessing prone,  
Conforms and models life to that alone.  
Each to the favourite happiness attends,  
And spurns the plan that aims at other ends ;  
Till, carried to excess in each domain,  
This favourite good begets peculiar pain.

But let us try these truths with closer eyes,  
And trace them through the prospect as it lies : 100  
Here for a while my proper cares resign'd,  
Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind,  
Like yon neglected shrub at random cast,  
That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast.

Far to the right where Apennine ascends,  
Bright as the summer, Italy extends ;  
Its uplands sloping deck the mountain's side,  
Woods over woods in gay theatric pride ;  
While oft some temple's mould'ring tops between  
With venerable grandeur mark the scene. 110

Could Nature's bounty satisfy the breast,  
The sons of Italy were surely blest.  
Whatever fruits in different climes were found,  
That proudly rise, or humbly court the ground ;  
Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear,  
Whose bright succession decks the varied year ;  
Whatever sweets salute the northern sky  
With vernal lives that blossom but to die ;  
These here disporting own the kindred soil,  
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil ; 120



While sea-born gales their gelid wings expand  
To winnow fragrance round the smiling land.

But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,  
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.  
In florid beauty groves and fields appear,  
Man seems the only growth that dwindles here.  
Contrasted faults through all his manners reign;  
Though poor, luxurious; though submissive, vain;  
Though grave, yet trifling; zealous, yet untrue;  
And e'en in penance planning sins anew. 130  
All evils here contaminate the mind,  
That opulence departed leaves behind;  
For wealth was theirs, not far remov'd the date,  
When commerce proudly flourish'd through the state;  
At her command the palace learn'd to rise,  
Again the long-fall'n column sought the skies;  
The canvas glow'd beyond e'en Nature warm,  
The pregnant quarry teem'd with human form;  
Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,  
Commerce on other shores display'd her sail; 140  
While nought remain'd of all that riches gave,  
But towns unmann'd, and lords without a slave;  
And late the nation found with fruitless skill  
Its former strength was but plethoric ill.

Yet still the loss of wealth is here supplied  
By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride;  
From these the feeble heart and long-fall'n mind  
An easy compensation seem to find.  
Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp array'd,  
The paste-board triumph and the cavalcade; 150  
Processions form'd for piety and love,  
A mistress or a saint in every grove.



By sports like these are all their cares beguil'd,  
The sports of children satisfy the child ;  
Each nobler aim, repress'd by long control,  
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul ;  
While low delights, succeeding fast behind,  
In happier meanness occupy the mind :  
As in those domes, where Caesars once bore sway,  
Defac'd by time and tottering in decay, 160  
There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,  
The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed,  
And, wond'ring man could want the larger pile,  
Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.

My soul, turn from them, turn we to survey  
Where rougher climes a nobler race display,  
Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansions tread,  
And force a churlish soil for scanty bread ;  
No product here the barren hills afford,  
But man and steel, the soldier and his sword. 170  
No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,  
But winter ling'ring chills the lap of May ;  
No Zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,  
But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest.

Yet still, e'en here, content can spread a charm,  
Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm.  
Though poor the peasant's hut, his feast though small,  
He sees his little lot the lot of all ;  
Sees no contiguous palace rear its head  
To shame the meanness of his humble shed ; 180  
No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal,  
To make him loathe his vegetable meal ;  
But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,  
Each wish contracting, fits him to the soil.



Cheerful at morn he wakes from short repose,  
Breasts the keen air, and carols as he goes;  
With patient angle trolls the finny deep,  
Or drives his venturous ploughshare to the steep,  
Or seeks the den where snow-tracks mark the way,  
And drags the struggling savage into day. 190  
At night returning, every labour sped,  
He sits him down the monarch of a shed;  
Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys  
His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze;  
While his lov'd partner, boastful of her hoard,  
Displays her cleanly platter on the board:  
And haply too some pilgrim, thither led,  
With many a tale repays the nightly bed.

Thus every good his native wilds impart  
Imprints the patriot passion on his heart, 200  
And e'en those ills that round his mansion rise  
Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.  
Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,  
And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;  
And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,  
Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,  
So the loud torrent and the whirlwind's roar  
But bind him to his native mountains more.

Such are the charms to barren states assign'd;  
Their wants but few, their wishes all confin'd. 210  
Yet let them only share the praises due,  
If few their wants, their pleasures are but few;  
For every want that stimulates the breast  
Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest.  
Whence from such lands each pleasing science flies  
That first excites desire, and then supplies;



Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,  
To fill the languid pause with finer joy ;  
Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,  
Catch every nerve, and vibrate through the frame. 220  
Their level life is but a smould'ring fire,  
Unquench'd by want, unfann'd by strong desire ;  
Unfit for raptures, or, if raptures cheer  
On some high festival of once a year,  
In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire,  
Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire.

But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow :  
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low ;  
For, as refinement stops, from sire to son  
Unalter'd, unimprov'd, the manners run ; 230  
And love's and friendship's finely-pointed dart  
Fall blunted from each indurated heart.  
Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast  
May sit, like falcons cowering on the nest ;  
But all the gentler morals, such as play  
Through life's more cultur'd walks, and charm the way,  
These, far dispers'd, on timorous pinions fly,  
To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.

To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,  
I turn ; and France displays her bright domain. 240  
Gay sprightly land of mirth and social ease,  
Pleas'd with thyself, whom all the world can please,  
How often have I led thy sportive choir,  
With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire !  
Where shading elms along the margin grew,  
And freshen'd from the wave the Zephyr flew ;  
And haply, though my harsh touch, faltering still,  
But mock'd all tune, and marr'd the dancer's skill,



Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,  
And dance, forgetful of the noon-tide hour. 250  
Alike all ages. Dames of ancient days  
Have led their children through the mirthful maze,  
And the gay grandsire, skill'd in gestic lore,  
Has frisk'd beneath the burthen of threescore.

So bless'd a life these thoughtless realms display,  
Thus idly busy rolls their world away:  
Theirs are those arts that mind to mind endear,  
For honour forms the social temper here:  
Honour, that praise which real merit gains,  
Or e'en imaginary worth obtains, 260  
Here passes current; paid from hand to hand,  
It shifts in splendid traffic round the land:  
From courts, to camps, to cottages it strays,  
And all are taught an avarice of praise;  
They please, are pleas'd, they give to get esteem,  
Till, seeming bless'd, they grow to what they seem.

But while this softer art their bliss supplies,  
It gives their follies also room to rise;  
For praise too dearly lov'd, or warmly sought,  
Enfeebles all internal strength of thought; 270  
And the weak soul, within itself unblest,  
Leans for all pleasure on another's breast.  
Hence ostentation here, with tawdry art,  
Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart;  
Here vanity assumes her pert grimace,  
And trims her robes of frieze with copper lace;  
Here beggar pride defrauds her daily cheer,  
To boast one splendid banquet once a year;  
The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,  
Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause. 280



To men of other minds my fancy flies,  
Embosom'd in the deep where Holland lies.  
Methinks her patient sons before me stand,  
Where the broad ocean leans against the land,  
And, sedulous to stop the coming tide,  
Lift the tall rampire's artificial pride.  
Onward, methinks, and diligently slow,  
The firm-connected bulwark seems to grow;  
Spreads its long arms amidst the wat'ry roar,  
Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore;  
While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,  
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile;  
The slow canal, the yellow-blossom'd vale,  
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,  
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain,  
A new creation rescu'd from his reign.

290

Thus, while around the wave-subjected soil  
Impels the native to repeated toil,  
Industrious habits in each bosom reign,  
And industry begets a love of gain.  
Hence all the good from opulence that springs,  
With all those ills superfluous treasure brings,  
Are here displayed. Their much-lov'd wealth imparts  
Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts;  
But view them closer, craft and fraud appear,  
E'en liberty itself is barter'd here.  
At gold's superior charms all freedom flies,  
The needy sell it, and the rich man buys;  
A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,  
Here wretches seek dishonourable graves,  
And calmly bent, to servitude conform,  
Dull as their lakes that slumber in the storm.

300

310



Heavens ! how unlike their Belgic sires of old !  
Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold ;  
War in each breast, and freedom on each brow ;  
How much unlike the sons of Britain now !

Fir'd at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,  
And flies where Britain courts the western spring ;  
Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian pride,  
And brighter streams than fam'd Hydaspes glide. 320  
There all around the gentlest breezes stray,  
There gentle music melts on every spray ;  
Creation's mildest charms are there combin'd,  
Extremes are only in the master's mind !  
Stern o'er each bosom reason holds her state,  
With daring aims irregularly great ;  
Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,  
I see the lords of human kind pass by,  
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,  
By forms unfashion'd, fresh from Nature's hand ; 330  
Fierce in their native hardness of soul,  
True to imagin'd right, above control,  
While e'en the peasant boasts these rights to scan,  
And learns to venerate himself as man.

Thine, Freedom, thine the blessings pictur'd here,  
Thine are those charms that dazzle and endear ;  
Too bless'd, indeed, were such without alloy,  
But foster'd e'en by Freedom ills annoy :  
That independence Britons prize too high,  
Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie ; 340  
The self-dependent lordlings stand alone,  
All claims that bind and sweeten life unknown ;  
Here, by the bonds of nature feebly held,  
Minds combat minds, repelling and repell'd ;



Ferments arise, imprison'd factions roar,  
Repress'd ambition struggles round her shore,  
Till, over-wrought, the general system feels  
Its motions stop, or phrenzy fire the wheels.

Nor this the worst. As nature's ties decay,  
As duty, love, and honour fail to sway, 350  
Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,  
Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe.  
Hence all obedience bows to these alone,  
And talent sinks, and merit weeps unknown;  
Till time may come, when, stripp'd of all her charms,  
The land of scholars, and the nurse of arms,  
Where noble stems transmit the patriot flame,  
Where kings have toil'd, and poets wrote for fame,  
One sink of level avarice shall lie,  
And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonour'd die. 360

Yet think not, thus when Freedom's ills I state,  
I mean to flatter kings, or court the great;  
Ye powers of truth, that bid my soul aspire,  
Far from my bosom drive the low desire;  
And thou, fair Freedom, taught alike to feel  
The rabble's rage, and tyrant's angry steel;  
Thou transitory flower, alike undone  
By proud contempt, or favour's fostering sun,  
Still may thy blooms the changeful clime endure,  
I only would repress them to secure: 370  
For just experience tells, in every soil,  
That those who think must govern those that toil;  
And all that Freedom's highest aims can reach,  
Is but to lay proportion'd loads on each.  
Hence, should one order disproportion'd grow,  
Its double weight must ruin all below.



O then how blind to all that earth requires,  
Who think it freedom when a part aspires !  
Calm is my soul, nor apt to rise in arms,  
Except when fast-approaching danger warms :  
But when contending chiefs blockade the throne,  
Contracting regal power to stretch their own ;  
When I behold a factious band agree  
To call it freedom when themselves are free ;  
Each wanton judge new penal statutes draw,  
Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law ;  
The wealth of climes, where savage nations roam,  
Pillag'd from slaves to purchase slaves at home ;  
Fear, pity, justice, indignation start,  
Tear off reserve, and bare my swelling heart ;  
Till half a patriot, half a coward grown,  
I fly from petty tyrants to the throne.

380

390

Yes, brother, curse with me that baleful hour,  
When first ambition struck at regal power ;  
And thus polluting honour in its source,  
Gave wealth to sway the mind with double force.  
Have we not seen, round Britain's peopled shore,  
Her useful sons exchanged for useless ore ?  
Seen all her triumphs but destruction haste,  
Like flaring tapers brightening as they waste ?  
Seen opulence, her grandeur to maintain,  
Lead stern depopulation in her train,  
And over fields where scatter'd hamlets rose  
In barren solitary pomp repose ?  
Have we not seen at pleasure's lordly call,  
The smiling long-frequented village fall ?  
Beheld the duteous son, the sire decay'd,  
The modest matron, and the blushing maid,

400



Forc'd from their homes, a melancholy train,  
To traverse climes beyond the western main; 410  
Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around,  
And Niagara stuns with thund'ring sound?

E'en now, perhaps, as there some pilgrim strays  
Through tangled forests, and through dangerous ways;  
Where beasts with man divided empire claim,  
And the brown Indian marks with murderous aim;  
There, while above the giddy tempest flies,  
And all around distressful yells arise,  
The pensive exile, bending with his woe,  
To stop too fearful, and too faint to go, 240  
Casts a long look where England's glories shine,  
And bids his bosom sympathize with mine.

Vain, very vain, my weary search to find  
That bliss which only centres in the mind:  
Why have I stray'd from pleasure and repose,  
To seek a good each government bestows?  
In every government, though terrors reign,  
Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws restrain,  
How small, of all that human hearts endure,  
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure. 430  
Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,  
Our own felicity we make or find:  
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,  
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.  
The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel,  
Luke's iron crown, and Damiens' bed of steel,  
To men remote from power but rarely known,  
Leave reason, faith, and conscience, all our own.



## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

SWEET Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,  
Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring swain,  
Where smiling Spring its earliest visit paid,  
And parting Summer's lingering blooms delay'd:  
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,  
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please:  
How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,  
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene!  
How often have I paused on every charm,  
The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm, 10  
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,  
The decent church that topp'd the neighbouring hill;  
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,  
For talking age and whispering lovers made!  
How often have I bless'd the coming day,  
When toil, remitting, lent its turn to play,  
And all the village train, from labour free,  
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree!  
While many a pastime circled in the shade,  
The young contending as the old survey'd; 20  
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,  
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round;  
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,  
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired—  
The dancing pair that simply sought renown,  
By holding out to tire each other down;  
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,  
While secret laughter titter'd round the place;



The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love ;  
The matron's glance, that would those looks reprove. 30  
These were thy charms, sweet village ! sports like these,  
With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please ;  
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed ;  
These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,  
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;  
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,  
And Desolation saddens all thy green :  
One only master grasps the whole domain,  
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain. 40  
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,  
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way ;  
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,  
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest :  
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,  
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries :  
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,  
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall ;  
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,  
Far, far away thy children leave the land. 50

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.  
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ;  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made :  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,  
When every rood of ground maintain'd its man ;  
For him light Labour spread her wholesome store,  
Just gave what life required, but gave no more : 60



His best companions, Innocence and Health;  
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are alter'd: Trade's unfeeling train  
Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;  
Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,  
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose;  
And every want to opulence allied,  
And every pang that folly pays to pride.  
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,  
Those calm desires that ask'd but little room, 70  
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,  
Lived in each look, and brighten'd all the green—  
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,  
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,  
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.  
Here, as I take my solitary rounds,  
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruin'd grounds,  
And, many a year elapsed, return to view  
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew— 80  
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,  
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,  
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—  
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,  
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;  
'To husband out life's taper at the close,  
And keep the flame from wasting by repose:  
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,  
Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill, 90  
Around my fire an evening group to draw,  
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;



And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,  
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,  
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,  
Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,  
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,  
How happy he who crowns, in shades like these,  
A youth of labour with an age of ease; 100  
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,  
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!  
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,  
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;  
No surly porter stands, in guilty state,  
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;  
But on he moves to meet his latter end,  
Angels around befriending virtue's friend;  
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,  
While resignation gently slopes the way; 110  
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,  
His heaven commences ere the world be past!

Sweet was the sound, when oft, at evening's close,  
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.  
There, as I pass'd with careless steps and slow,  
The mingled notes came soften'd from below;  
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,  
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young;  
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,  
The playful children just let loose from school; 120  
The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whispering wind,  
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;—  
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,  
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.



But now the sounds of population fail,  
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,  
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,  
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled—  
All but yon widow'd, solitary thing,  
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring; 130  
She, wretched matron—forced, in age, for bread,  
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,  
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,  
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn,—  
She only left of all the harmless train,  
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,  
And still where many a garden-flower grows wild,  
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,  
The village preacher's modest mansion rose. 140  
A man he was to all the country dear,  
And passing rich with forty pounds a year.  
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,  
Nor e'er had changed, nor wish'd to change, his place;  
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power  
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;  
Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,  
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.  
His house was known to all the vagrant train;  
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain; 150  
The long-remember'd beggar was his guest,  
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;  
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,  
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;  
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,  
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away;—



Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,  
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.  
Pleased with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,  
And quite forgot their vices in their woe; 160  
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,  
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,  
And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side;  
But in his duty prompt at every call,  
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all:  
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,  
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,  
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,  
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way. 170

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,  
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismay'd,  
The reverend champion stood. At his control,  
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;  
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,  
And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,  
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;  
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,  
And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray. 180  
The service past, around the pious man  
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;  
E'en children follow'd, with endearing wile,  
And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile;  
His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd;  
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distress'd:  
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,  
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.



As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm, 190  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,  
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,  
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,  
The village master taught his little school.  
A man severe he was, and stern to view;  
I knew him well, and every truant knew:  
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace  
The day's disasters in his morning face; 200  
Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee  
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;  
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,  
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd.  
Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught,  
The love he bore to learning was in fault.  
The village all declared how much he knew  
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;  
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,  
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge. 210  
In arguing, too, the parson own'd his skill,  
For e'en though vanquish'd, he could argue still;  
While words of learned length and thundering sound  
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;  
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,  
That one small head could carry all he knew.  
But past is all his fame;—the very spot  
Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.

Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,  
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye, 220



Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,  
Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,  
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,  
And news much older than their ale went round.  
Imagination fondly stoops to trace  
The parlour splendours of that festive place;  
The whitewash'd wall, the nicely-sanded floor,  
The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door,  
The chest, contrived a double debt to pay,  
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day, 230  
The pictures placed for ornament and use,  
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose,  
The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,  
With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel, gay;—  
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,  
Ranged o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

Vain transitory splendours! could not all  
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?  
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart  
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart. 240  
Thither no more the peasant shall repair,  
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;  
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,  
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;  
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,  
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;  
The host himself no longer shall be found  
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;  
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,  
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. 250

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,  
These simple blessings of the lowly train;



To me more dear, congenial to my heart,  
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.  
Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,  
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;  
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,  
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined :  
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,  
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd, 260  
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,  
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain ;  
And, e'en while Fashion's brightest arts decoy,  
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey  
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,  
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand  
Between a splendid and a happy land.  
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,  
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore ; 270  
Hoards, e'en beyond the miser's wish, abound,  
And rich men flock from all the world around.  
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name  
That leaves our useful products still the same.  
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride  
Takes up a space that many poor supplied ;  
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,  
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds ;  
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth, 279  
Has robb'd the neighbouring fields of half their growth ;  
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,  
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green ;  
Around the world each needful product flies,  
For all the luxuries the world supplies ;



While thus the land, adorn'd for pleasure all,  
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female, unadorn'd and plain,  
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,  
Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,  
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes; 290  
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,  
When time advances, and when lovers fail,  
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,  
In all the glaring impotence of dress:  
Thus fares the land by luxury betray'd;  
In nature's simplest charms at first array'd;—  
But verging to decline, its splendours rise,  
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;  
While, scourged by famine, from the smiling land  
The mournful peasant leads his humble band; 300  
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,  
The country blooms—a garden and a grave!

Where, then, ah! where shall poverty reside,  
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?  
If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd,  
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,  
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,  
And e'en the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped—what waits him there?  
To see profusion that he must not share; 310  
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined  
To pamper luxury and thin mankind;  
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know  
Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe:  
Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,  
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;



Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,  
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way:  
The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign,  
Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train; 320  
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,  
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.  
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!  
Sure these denote one universal joy!—  
Are these thy serious thoughts?—ah, turn thine eyes  
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies:  
She once, perhaps, in village plenty bless'd,  
Has wept at tales of innocence distress'd;  
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,  
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn: 330  
Now lost to all, her friends, her virtue, fled,  
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,  
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,  
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,  
When idly first, ambitious of the town,  
She left her wheel, and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn, thine, the loveliest train,  
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?  
E'en now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,  
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread! 340

Ah, no. To distant climes, a dreary scene,  
Where half the convex world intrudes between,  
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,  
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.  
Far different there from all that charm'd before,  
The various terrors of that horrid shore;  
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,  
And fiercely shed intolerable day;



Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,  
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling; 350  
Those poisonous fields, with rank luxuriance crown'd,  
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;  
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake  
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;  
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,  
And savage men more murderous still than they:  
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,  
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.  
Far different these from every former scene,  
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green, 360  
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,  
That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,  
That call'd them from their native walks away;  
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,  
Hung round their bowers, and fondly look'd their last,  
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain,  
For seats like these beyond the western main;  
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,  
Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep! 370  
The good old sire the first prepared to go  
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;  
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,  
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.  
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,  
The fond companion of his helpless years,  
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,  
And left a lover's for a father's arms.  
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,  
And bless'd the cot where every pleasure rose, 380



And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,  
And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear;  
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief  
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O Luxury, thou cursed by Heaven's decree,  
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!  
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,  
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!  
Kingdoms by thee to sickly greatness grown,  
Boast of a florid vigour not their own; 390  
At every draught more large and large they grow,  
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;  
Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,  
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

E'en now the devastation is begun,  
And half the business of destruction done;  
E'en now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,  
I see the rural Virtues leave the land.  
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail  
That idly waiting flaps with every gale, 400  
Downward they move, a melancholy band,  
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand;  
Contented Toil, and hospitable Care,  
And kind connubial Tenderness are there;  
And Piety with wishes placed above,  
And steady Loyalty, and faithful Love.

And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,  
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade!  
Unfit, in these degenerate times of shame,  
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame; 410  
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,  
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;



Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe,  
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;  
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,  
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!  
Farewell! and oh! where'er thy voice be tried,  
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,  
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,  
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 420  
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,  
Redress the rigours of th' inclement clime;  
Aid slighted Truth with thy persuasive strain;  
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;  
Teach him that states, of native strength possest,  
Though very poor, may still be very blest;  
That Trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,  
As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away;  
While self-dependent power can time defy,  
As rocks resist the billows and the sky. 430



# RETALIATION

## A POEM

OF old, when Scarron his companions invited,  
Each guest brought his dish, and the feast was united;  
If our landlord supplies us with beef, and with fish,  
Let each guest bring himself, and he brings the best dish:  
Our Dean shall be venison, just fresh from the plains;  
Our Burke shall be tongue, with a garnish of brains;  
Our Will shall be wild-fowl, of excellent flavour,  
And Dick with his pepper shall heighten their savour:  
Our Cumberland's sweet-bread its place shall obtain,  
And Douglas is pudding, substantial and plain: 10  
Our Garrick's a salad; for in him we see  
Oil, vinegar, sugar, and saltness agree:  
To make out the dinner, full certain I am,  
That Ridge is anchovy, and Reynolds is lamb;  
That Hickey's a capon, and by the same rule,  
Magnanimous Goldsmith a gooseberry fool.  
At a dinner so various, at such a repast,  
Who'd not be a glutton, and stick to the last?  
Here, waiter! more wine, let me sit while I'm able,  
Till all my companions sink under the table; 20  
Then, with chaos and blunders encircling my head,  
Let me ponder, and tell what I think of the dead.

Here lies the good Dean, re-united to earth,  
Who mix'd reason with pleasure, and wisdom with mirth:  
If he had any faults, he has left us in doubt;  
At least, in six weeks, I could not find 'em out;



Yet some have declar'd, and it can't be denied 'em,  
That sly-boots was cursedly cunning to hide 'em.

Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,  
We scarcely can praise it, or blame it too much; 30  
Who, born for the Universe, narrow'd his mind,  
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.  
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat  
To persuade Tommy Townshend to lend him a vote;  
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,  
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining;  
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit,  
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit:  
For a patriot, too cool; for a drudge, disobedient;  
And too fond of the *right* to pursue the *expedient*. 40  
In short, 'twas his fate, unemploy'd, or in place, Sir,  
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.

Here lies honest William, whose heart was a mint,  
While the owner ne'er knew half the good that was in't;  
The pupil of impulse, it forc'd him along,  
His conduct still right, with his argument wrong;  
Still aiming at honour, yet fearing to roam,  
The coachman was tipsy, the chariot drove home;  
Would you ask for his merits? alas! he had none;  
What was good was spontaneous, his faults were his own. 50

Here lies honest Richard, whose fate I must sigh at;  
Alas, that such frolic should now be so quiet!  
What spirits were his! what wit and what whim!  
Now breaking a jest, and now breaking a limb;  
Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball,  
Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all!  
In short, so provoking a devil was Dick,  
That we wish'd him full ten times a day at Old Nick;



But, missing his mirth and agreeable vein,  
As often we wish'd to have Dick back again.

60

Here Cumberland lies, having acted his parts,  
The Terence of England, the mender of hearts;  
A flattering painter, who made it his care  
To draw men as they ought to be, not as they are.  
His gallants are all faultless, his women divine,  
And comedy wonders at being so fine;  
Like a tragedy queen he has dizen'd her out,  
Or rather like tragedy giving a rout.  
His fools have their follies so lost in a crowd  
Of virtues and feelings, that folly grows proud;  
And coxcombs, alike in their failings alone,  
Adopting his portraits, are pleas'd with their own.  
Say, where has our poet this malady caught?  
Or, wherefore his characters thus without fault?  
Say, was it that vainly directing his view  
To find out men's virtues, and finding them few,  
Quite sick of pursuing each troublesome elf,  
He grew lazy at last, and drew from himself?

70

Here Douglas retires, from his toils to relax,  
The scourge of impostors, the terror of quacks:  
Come, all ye quack bards, and ye quacking divines,  
Come, and dance on the spot where your tyrant reclines:  
When Satire and Censure encircl'd his throne,  
I fear'd for your safety, I fear'd for my own;  
But now he is gone, and we want a detector,  
Our Dodds shall be pious, our Kenricks shall lecture;  
Macpherson write bombast, and call it a style,  
Our Townshend make speeches, and I shall compile;  
New Lauders and Bowers the Tweed shall cross over,  
No countryman living their tricks to discover;

80

90



Detection her taper shall quench to a spark,  
And Scotchman meet Scotchman, and cheat in the dark.

Here lies David Garrick, describe me, who can,  
An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man;  
As an actor, confess'd without rival to shine:  
As a wit, if not first, in the very first line:  
Yet, with talents like these, and an excellent heart,  
The man had his failings, a dupe to his art.  
Like an ill-judging beauty, his colours he spread,  
And beplaster'd with rouge his own natural red. 100  
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting;  
'Twas only that when he was off he was acting.  
With no reason on earth to go out of his way,  
He turn'd and he varied full ten times a day.  
Though secure of our hearts, yet confoundedly sick  
If they were not his own by finessing and trick,  
He cast off his friends, as a huntsman his pack,  
For he knew when he pleas'd he could whistle them back.  
Of praise a mere glutton, he swallow'd what came,  
And the puff of a dunce he mistook it for fame; 110  
Till his relish grown callous, almost to disease,  
Who pepper'd the highest was surest to please.  
But let us be candid, and speak out our mind,  
If dunces applauded, he paid them in kind.  
Ye Kenricks, ye Kellys, and Woodfalls so grave,  
What a commerce was yours, while you got and you gave!  
How did Grub-street re-echo the shouts that you rais'd,  
While he was be-Roscius'd and you were be-prais'd!  
But peace to his spirit, wherever it flies,  
To act as an angel, and mix with the skies: 120  
Those poets, who owe their best fame to his skill,  
Shall still be his flatterers, go where he will.



Old Shakespeare, receive him, with praise and with love,  
And Beaumonts and Bens be his Kellys above.

Here Hickey reclines, a most blunt, pleasant creature,  
And slander itself must allow him good nature:  
He cherish'd his friend, and he relish'd a bumper;  
Yet one fault he had, and that one was a thumper.  
Perhaps you may ask if the man was a miser?  
I answer, no, no, for he always was wiser: 130  
Too courteous, perhaps, or obligingly flat?  
His very worst foe can't accuse him of that:  
Perhaps he confided in men as they go,  
And so was too foolishly honest? Ah no!  
Then what was his failing? come, tell it, and, burn ye!  
He was, could he help it?—a special attorney.

Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,  
He has not left a better or wiser behind:  
His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand;  
His manners were gentle, complying, and bland; 140  
Still born to improve us in every part,  
His pencil our faces, his manners our heart:  
To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,  
When they judg'd without skill he was still hard of hearing:  
When they talk'd of their Raphaels, Correggios, and stuff,  
He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff.



## A REVERIE

SCARCE a day passes in which we do not hear compliments paid to Dryden, Pope, and other writers of the last age, while not a month comes forward that is not loaded with invective against the writers of this. Strange, that our critics should be fond of giving their favours to those who are insensible of the obligation, and their dislike to these who, of all mankind, are most apt to retaliate the injury.

Even though our present writers had not equal merit with their predecessors, it would be politic to use them  
10 with ceremony. Every compliment paid them would be more agreeable, in proportion as they least deserved it. Tell a lady with a handsome face that she is pretty, she only thinks it her due; it is what she has heard a thousand times before from others, and disregards the compliment: but assure a lady, the cut of whose visage is something more plain, that she looks killing to-day, she instantly  
bridles up and feels the force of the well-timed flattery the whole day after. Compliments which we think are deserved, we only accept, as debts, with indifference;  
20 but those which conscience informs us we do not merit, we receive with the same gratitude that we do favours given away.

Our gentlemen, however, who preside at the distribution of literary fame, seem resolved to part with praise neither from motives of justice, or generosity; one would think, when they take pen in hand, that it was only to blot reputations, and to put their seals to the packet which consigns every new-born effort to oblivion.



Yet, notwithstanding the republic of letters hangs at present so feebly together; though those friendships which once promoted literary fame seem now to be discontinued; though every writer who now draws the quill seems to aim at profit, as well as applause, many among them are probably laying in stores for immortality, and are provided with a sufficient stock of reputation to last the whole journey.

As I was indulging these reflections, in order to eke out the present page, I could not avoid pursuing the metaphor, of going a journey, in my imagination, and formed the 10 following Reverie, too wild for allegory, and too regular for a dream.

I fancied myself placed in the yard of a large inn, in which there were an infinite number of wagons and stage-coaches, attended by fellows who either invited the company to take their places, or were busied in packing their baggage. Each vehicle had its inscription, showing the place of its destination. On one I could read, *The pleasure stage-coach*; on another, *The wagon of industry*; on a third, *The vanity whim*; and on a fourth, *The landau of riches*. I had some 20 inclination to step into each of these, one after another; but, I know not by what means, I passed them by, and at last fixed my eye upon a small carriage, Berlin fashion, which seemed the most convenient vehicle at a distance in the world; and, upon my nearer approach, found it to be *The fame machine*.

I instantly made up to the coachman, whom I found to be an affable and seemingly good-natured fellow. He informed me, that he had but a few days ago returned from the temple of fame, to which he had been carrying 30 Addison, Swift, Pope, Steele, Congreve, and Colley Cibber; that they made but indifferent company by the way; and that he once or twice was going to empty his berlin of the whole cargo: 'However,' says he, 'I got them all safe home,



with no other damage than a black eye, which Colley gave Mr. Pope, and am now returned for another coachful.' 'If that be all, friend,' said I, 'and if you are in want of company, I'll make one with all my heart. Open the door; I hope the machine rides easy.' 'Oh! for that, sir, extremely easy.' But still keeping the door shut, and measuring me with his eye, 'Pray, sir, have you no luggage? You seem to be a good-natured sort of a gentleman; but I don't find you have got any luggage, and I never permit any to  
10 travel with me but such as have something valuable to pay for coach-hire.' Examining my pockets, I own I was not a little disconcerted at this unexpected rebuff; but considering that I carried a number of the BEE under my arm, I was resolved to open it in his eyes, and dazzle him with the splendour of the page. He read the title and contents, however, without any emotion, and assured me he had never heard of it before. 'In short, friend,' said he, now losing all his former respect, 'you must not come in. I expect better passengers; but, as you seem a harmless  
20 creature, perhaps, if there be room left, I may let you ride a while for charity.'

I now took my stand by the coachman at the door, and since I could not command a seat, was resolved to be as useful as possible, and earn by my assiduity, what I could not by my merit.

The next that presented for a place was a most whimsical figure indeed. He was hung round with papers of his own composing, not unlike those who sing ballads in the streets, and came dancing up to the door with all the confidence of  
30 instant admittance. The volubility of his motion and address prevented my being able to read more of his cargo than the word *Inspector*, which was written in great letters at the top of some of the papers. He opened the coach-door himself without any ceremony, and was just slipping



in, when the coachman, with as little ceremony, pulled him back. Our figure seemed perfectly angry at this repulse, and demanded gentleman's satisfaction. 'Lord, sir!' replied the coachman, 'instead of proper luggage, by your bulk you seem loaded for a West India voyage. You are big enough, with all your papers, to crack twenty stage-coaches. Excuse me, indeed, sir, for you must not enter.' Our figure now began to expostulate; he assured the coachman, that though his baggage seemed so bulky, it was perfectly light, and that he would be contented with the smallest 10 corner of room. But Jehu was inflexible, and the carrier of the *Inspectors* was sent to dance back again, with all his papers fluttering in the wind. We expected to have no more trouble from this quarter, when, in a few minutes, the same figure changed his appearance, like harlequin upon the stage, and with the same confidence again made his approaches, dressed in lace, and carrying nothing but a nosegay. Upon coming near, he thrust the nosegay to the coachman's nose, grasped the brass, and seemed now resolved to enter by violence. I found the struggle soon 20 begin to grow hot, and the coachman, who was a little old, unable to continue the contest; so, in order to ingratiate myself, I stepped in to his assistance, and our united efforts sent our literary Proteus, though worsted, unconquered still, clear off, dancing a rigadoon, and smelling to his own nosegay.

The person who after him appeared as candidate for a place in the stage came up with an air not quite so confident, but somewhat, however, theatrical; and, instead of entering, made the coachman a very low bow, which the other 30 returned, and desired to see his baggage; upon which he instantly produced some farces, a tragedy, and other miscellany productions. The coachman, casting his eye upon the cargo, assured him, at present he could not



possibly have a place, but hoped in time he might aspire to one, as he seemed to have read in the book of nature, without a careful perusal of which none ever found entrance at the temple of fame. 'What!' replied the disappointed poet, 'shall my tragedy, in which I have vindicated the cause of liberty and virtue——' 'Follow nature,' returned the other, 'and never expect to find lasting fame by topics which only please from their popularity. Had you been first in the cause of freedom, or praised in virtue more than  
10 an empty name, it is possible you might have gained admittance; but at present I beg, sir, you will stand aside for another gentleman whom I see approaching.'

This was a very grave personage, whom at some distance I took for one of the most reserved, and even disagreeable figures I had seen; but as he approached, his appearance improved, and when I could distinguish him thoroughly, I perceived, that, in spite of the severity of his brow, he had one of the most good-natured countenances that could be imagined. Upon coming to open the stage door, he  
20 lifted a parcel of folios into the seat before him, but our inquisitorial coachman at once shoved them out again. 'What, not take in my dictionary!' exclaimed the other in a rage. 'Be patient, sir,' replied the coachman, 'I have drove a coach, man and boy, these two thousand years; but I do not remember to have carried above one dictionary during the whole time. That little bock which I perceive peeping from one of your pockets, may I presume to ask what it contains?' 'A mere trifle,' replied the author, 'it is called the *Rambler*.' 'The *Rambler*!' says the coachman,  
30 'I beg, sir, you'll take your place; I have heard our ladies in the court of Apollo frequently mention it with rapture; and Clio, who happens to be a little grave, has been heard to prefer it to the *Spectator*; though others have observed, that the reflections, by being refined, sometimes become minute.'



This grave gentleman was scarce seated, when another, whose appearance was something more modern, seemed willing to enter, yet afraid to ask. He carried in his hand a bundle of essays, of which the coachman was curious enough to inquire the contents. 'These,' replied the gentleman, 'are rhapsodies against the religion of my country.' 'And how can you expect to come into my coach, after thus choosing the wrong side of the question?' 'Aye, but I am right,' replied the other; 'and if you give me leave, I shall in a few minutes state the argument.' 'Right or 10 wrong,' said the coachman, 'he who disturbs religion is a blockhead, and he shall never travel in a coach of mine.' 'If then,' said the gentleman, mustering up all his courage, 'if I am not to have admittance as an essayist, I hope I shall not be repulsed as an historian; the last volume of my history met with applause.' 'Yes,' replied the coachman, 'but I have heard only the first approved at the temple of fame; and as I see you have it about you, enter without further ceremony.' My attention was now diverted to a crowd, who were pushing forward a person that seemed more 20 inclined to the *stage-coach of riches*; but by their means he was driven forward to the same machine, which he, however, seemed heartily to despise. Impelled, however, by their solicitations, he steps up, flourishing a voluminous history, and demanding admittance. 'Sir, I have formerly heard your name mentioned,' says the coachman, 'but never as an historian. Is there no other work upon which you may claim a place?' 'None,' replied the other, 'except a romance; but this is a work of too trifling a nature to claim future attention.' 'You mistake,' says the inquisitor; 'a well-written 30 romance is no such easy task as is generally imagined. I remember formerly to have carried Cervantes and Segrais; and if you think fit, you may enter.'

Upon our three literary travellers coming into the same



coach, I listened attentively to hear what might be the conversation that passed upon this extraordinary occasion ; when, instead of agreeable or entertaining dialogue, I found them grumbling at each other, and each seemed discontented with his companions. Strange ! thought I to myself, that they who are thus born to enlighten the world, should still preserve the narrow prejudices of childhood, and, by disagreeing, make even the highest merit ridiculous. Were the learned and the wise to unite against the dunces of  
10 society, instead of sometimes siding into opposite parties with them, they might throw a lustre upon each other's reputation, and teach every rank of subordinate merit, if not to admire, at least not to avow dislike.

In the midst of these reflections, I perceived the coachman, unmindful of me, had now mounted the box. Several were approaching to be taken in, whose pretensions I was sensible were very just ; I therefore desired him to stop, and take in more passengers ; but he replied, as he had now mounted the box, it would be improper to come down ;  
20 but that he should take them all, one after the other, when he should return. So he drove away ; and, for myself, as I could not get in, I mounted behind, in order to hear the conversation on the way.

*[To be continued.]*



# LETTERS OF A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

## LETTER IV

ENGLISH PRIDE—LIBERTY—AN INSTANCE OF BOTH—NEWS-  
PAPERS—POLITENESS

*From Lien Chi Altangi, to the care of Fipsihi, resident in Moscow; to be  
forwarded by the Russian caravan to Fum Hoam, First President of the  
Ceremonial Academy at Peking in China*

THE English seem as silent as the Japanese, yet vainer than the inhabitants of Siam. Upon my arrival I attributed that reserve to modesty, which I now find has its origin in pride. Condescend to address them first, and you are <sup>10</sup> sure of their acquaintance; stoop to flattery, and you conciliate their friendship and esteem. They bear hunger, cold, fatigue, and all the miseries of life without shrinking; danger only calls forth their fortitude; they even exult in calamity; but contempt is what they cannot bear. An Englishman fears contempt more than death; he often flies to death as a refuge from its pressure; and dies when he fancies the world has ceased to esteem him.

Pride seems the source not only of their national vices, but of their national virtues also. An Englishman is <sup>20</sup> taught to love his king as his friend, but to acknowledge no other master than the laws which himself has contributed to enact. He despises those nations, who, that one may be free, are all content to be slaves; who first lift a tyrant into terror, and then shrink under his power as if delegated



from heaven. Liberty is echoed in all their assemblies; and thousands might be found ready to offer up their lives for the sound, though perhaps not one of all the number understands its meaning. The lowest mechanic, however, looks upon it as his duty to be a watchful guardian of his country's freedom, and often uses a language that might seem haughty, even in the mouth of the great emperor who traces his ancestry to the moon.

A few days ago, passing by one of their prisons, I  
10 could not avoid stopping, in order to listen to a dialogue which I thought might afford me some entertainment. The conversation was carried on between a debtor through the grate of his prison, a porter, who had stopped to rest his burthen, and a soldier at the window. The subject was upon a threatened invasion from France, and each seemed extremely anxious to rescue his country from the impending danger. 'For my part,' cries the prisoner, 'the greatest of my apprehensions is for our freedom; if the French should conquer, what would become of English  
20 liberty? My dear friends, liberty is the Englishman's prerogative; we must preserve that at the expense of our lives; of that the French shall never deprive us; it is not to be expected that men who are slaves themselves would preserve our freedom should they happen to conquer.' 'Ay, slaves,' cries the porter, 'they are all slaves, fit only to carry burthens, every one of them. Before I would stoop to slavery, may this be my poison (and he held the goblet in his hand), may this be my poison—but I would sooner list for a soldier.'

30 The soldier, taking the goblet from his friend, with much awe fervently cried out, 'It is not so much our liberties as our religion that would suffer by such a change; ay, our religion, my lads. May the Devil sink me into flames' (such was the solemnity of his adjuration), 'if the



French should come over, but our religion would be utterly undone.' So saying, instead of a libation, he applied the goblet to his lips, and confirmed his sentiments with a ceremony of the most persevering devotion.

In short, every man here pretends to be a politician: even the fair sex are sometimes found to mix the severity of national altercation with the blandishments of love, and often become conquerors by more weapons of destruction than their eyes.

This universal passion for politics is gratified by Daily 10 Gazettes, as with us at China. But as in ours the emperor endeavours to instruct his people, in theirs the people endeavour to instruct the administration. You must not, however, imagine, that they who compile these papers have any actual knowledge of the politics, or the government of a state: they only collect their materials from the oracle of some coffee-house; which oracle has himself gathered them the night before from a beau at a gaming-table, who has pillaged his knowledge from a great man's porter, who has had his information from the great 20 man's gentleman, who has invented the whole story for his own amusement the night preceding.

The English, in general, seem fonder of gaining the esteem than the love of those they converse with. This gives a formality to their amusements; their gayest conversations have something too wise for innocent relaxation: though in company you are seldom disgusted with the absurdity of a fool, you are seldom lifted into rapture by those strokes of vivacity which give instant, though not permanent pleasure. 30

What they want, however, in gaiety, they make up in politeness. You smile at hearing me praise the English for their politeness; you who have heard very different accounts from the missionaries at Peking, who have seen



such a different behaviour in their merchants and seamen at home. But I must still repeat it, the English seem more polite than any of their neighbours; their great art in this respect lies in endeavouring, while they oblige, to lessen the force of the favour. Other countries are fond of obliging a stranger; but seem desirous that he should be sensible of the obligation. The English confer their kindness with an appearance of indifference, and give away benefits with an air as if they despised them.

- 10 Walking a few days ago between an English and a Frenchman into the suburbs of the city, we were overtaken by a heavy shower of rain. I was unprepared; but they had each large coats, which defended them from what seemed to me a perfect inundation. The Englishman seeing me shrink from the weather, accosted me thus: 'Psha, man, what dost shrink at? here, take this coat; I don't want it; I find it no way useful to me; I had as lief be without it.' The Frenchman began to show his politeness in turn. 'My dear friend,' cries he, 'why  
20 won't you oblige me by making use of my coat? you see how well it defends me from the rain; I should not choose to part with it to others, but to such a friend as you I could even part with my skin to do him service.'

From such minute instances as these, most reverend Fum Hoam, I am sensible your sagacity will collect instruction. The volume of nature is the book of knowledge; and he becomes most wise who makes the most judicious selection. Farewell.



## LETTER XIII

### A VISIT TO WESTMINSTER ABBEY

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, First President of the Ceremonial Academy in China*

I AM just returned from Westminster Abbey, the place of sepulture for the philosophers, heroes, and kings of England. What a gloom do monumental inscriptions, and all the venerable remains of deceased merit inspire ! Imagine a temple marked with the hand of antiquity, solemn as religious awe, adorned with all the magnificence of barbarous profusion, dim 10 windows, fretted pillars, long colonnades, and dark ceilings. Think, then, what were my sensations at being introduced to such a scene. I stood in the midst of the temple, and threw my eyes round on the walls, filled with the statues, the inscriptions, and the monuments of the dead.

Alas ! I said to myself, how does pride attend the puny child of dust even to the grave ! Even humble as I am, I possess more consequence in the present scene than the greatest hero of them all : they have toiled for an hour to gain a transient immortality, and are at length retired to the 20 grave, where they have no attendant but the worm, none to flatter but the epitaph.

As I was indulging such reflections, a gentleman, dressed in black, perceiving me to be a stranger, came up, entered into conversation, and politely offered to be my instructor and guide through the temple. ‘ If any monument,’ said he, ‘ should particularly excite your curiosity, I shall endeavour to satisfy your demands.’ I accepted with thanks the gentleman’s offer, adding, that ‘ I was come to observe the



policy, the wisdom, and the justice of the English, in conferring rewards upon deceased merit. If adulation like this,' continued I, 'be properly conducted, as it can no ways injure those who are flattered, so it may be a glorious incentive to those who are now capable of enjoying it. It is the duty of every good government to turn this monumental pride to its own advantage; to become strong in the aggregate from the weakness of the individual. If none but the truly great have a place in this awful repository, a  
 10 temple like this will give the finest lessons of morality, and be a strong incentive to true ambition. I am told, that none have a place here but characters of the most distinguished merit.' The man in black seemed impatient at my observations; so I discontinued my remarks, and we walked on together to take a view of every particular monument in order as it lay.

As the eye is naturally caught by the finest objects, I could not avoid being particularly curious about one monument, which appeared more beautiful than the rest. 'That,' said I to my guide, 'I take to be the tomb of some very great  
 20 man. By the peculiar excellence of the workmanship, and the magnificence of the design, this must be a trophy raised to the memory of some king who has saved his country from ruin, or law-giver, who has reduced his fellow-citizens from anarchy into just subjection.' 'It is not requisite,' replied my companion smiling, 'to have such qualifications in order to have a very fine monument here. More humble abilities will suffice.'—'What! I suppose then, the gaining two or three battles, or the taking half a score towns, is thought a sufficient qualification?'—'Gaining battles, or taking  
 30 towns,' replied the man in black, 'may be of service; but a gentleman may have a very fine monument here without ever seeing a battle or a siege.' 'This, then, is the monument of some poet, I presume, of one whose wit has gained him immortality?'—'No, sir,' replied my guide, 'the gentleman



who lies here never made verses ; and as for wit, he despised it in others, because he had none himself.' 'Pray tell me then in a word,' said I peevishly, 'what is the great man who lies here particularly remarkable for?'—'Remarkable, sir!' said my companion ; 'why, sir, the gentleman that lies here is remarkable, very remarkable—for a tomb in Westminster Abbey.'—'But, head of my ancestors ! how has he got here ? I fancy he could never bribe the guardians of the temple to give him a place. Should he not be ashamed to be seen among company, where even moderate merit would look 10 like infamy?'—'I suppose,' replied the man in black, 'the gentleman was rich, and his friends, as is usual in such a case, told him he was great. He readily believed them ; the guardians of the temple, as they got by the self-delusion, were ready to believe him too ; so he paid his money for a fine monument ; and the workman, as you see, has made him one of the most beautiful. Think not, however, that this gentleman is singular in his desire of being buried among the great ; there are several others in the temple, who, hated and shunned by the great while alive, have 20 come here, fully resolved to keep them company now they are dead.'

As we walked along to a particular part of the temple, 'There,' says the gentleman, pointing with his finger, 'that is the Poets' Corner ; there you see the monuments of Shakespeare, and Milton, and Prior, and Drayton.' 'Drayton!' I replied, 'I never heard of him before ; but I have been told of one Pope ; is he there?' 'It is time enough,' replied my guide, 'these hundred years ; he is not long dead ; people have not done hating him yet.' 'Strange,' cried I, 30 'can any be found to hate a man, whose life was wholly spent in entertaining and instructing his fellow-creatures?' 'Yes,' says my guide, 'they hate him for that very reason. There are a set of men called answerers of books, who take



upon them to watch the republic of letters, and distribute reputation by the sheet. These answerers have no other employment but to cry out Dunce, and Scribbler; to praise the dead, and revile the living; to grant a man of confessed abilities some small share of merit; to applaud twenty blockheads, in order to gain the reputation of candour; and to revile the moral character of the man whose writings they cannot injure. Such wretches are kept in pay by some mercenary bookseller, or more frequently  
 10 the bookseller himself takes this dirty work off their hands, as all that is required is to be very abusive and very dull. Every poet of any genius is sure to find such enemies; he feels, though he seems to despise, their malice; they make him miserable here, and in the pursuit of empty fame, at last he gains solid anxiety.'

'Has this been the case with every poet I see here?' cried I. 'Yes, with every mother's son of them,' replied he, 'except he happened to be born a mandarine. If he has much money, he may buy reputation from your book-answerers,  
 20 as well as a monument from the guardians of the temple.'

'But are there not some men of distinguished taste, as in China, who are willing to patronize men of merit, and soften the rancour of malevolent dulness?' 'I own there are many,' replied the man in black, 'but, alas! Sir, the book-answerers crowd about them, and call themselves the writers of books; and the patron is too indolent to distinguish; thus poets are kept at a distance, while their enemies eat up all their rewards at the mandarine's table.'

Leaving this part of the temple, we made up to an iron  
 30 gate, through which my companion told me we were to pass, in order to see the monuments of the kings. Accordingly I marched up without further ceremony, and was going to enter, when a person who held the gate in his hand told me I must pay first. I was surprised at such a demand; and



asked the man, whether the people of England kept a show? whether the paltry sum he demanded was not a national reproach? whether it was not more to the honour of the country to let their magnificence or their antiquities be openly seen, than thus meanly to tax a curiosity which tended to their own honour? 'As for your questions,' replied the gate-keeper, 'to be sure they may be very right because I don't understand them; but, as for that there threepence, I farm it from one—who rents it from another—who hires it from a third—who leases it from the guardians of the 10 temple, and we all must live.' I expected, upon paying here, to see something extraordinary, since what I had seen for nothing filled me with so much surprise: but in this I was disappointed; there was little more within than black coffins, rusty armour, tattered standards, and some few slovenly figures in wax. I was sorry I had paid, but I comforted myself by considering it would be my last payment. A person attended us, who, without once blushing, told an hundred lies; he talked of a lady who died by pricking her finger; of a king with a golden head, and 20 twenty such pieces of absurdity. 'Look ye there, gentlemen,' says he, pointing to an old oak chair, 'there's a curiosity for ye; in that chair the kings of England were crowned: you see also a stone underneath, and that stone is Jacob's pillow.' I could see no curiosity either in the oak chair, or the stone: could I, indeed, behold one of the old kings of England seated in this, or Jacob's head laid upon the other, there might be something curious in the sight; but in the present case there was no more reason for my surprise than if I should pick a stone from their streets, and call it a curiosity, 30 merely because one of the kings happened to tread upon it as he passed in a procession.

From hence our conductor led us through several dark walks and winding ways, uttering lies, talking to himself.



and flourishing a wand which he held in his hand. He reminded me of the black magicians of Kobi. After we had been almost fatigued with a variety of objects, he at last desired me to consider attentively a certain suit of armour, which seemed to show nothing remarkable. 'This armour,' said he, 'belonged to General Monk.'—Very surprising, that a general should wear armour!—'And pray,' added he, 'observe this cap, this is General Monk's cap.'—'Very strange indeed, very strange, that a general should have  
 10 a cap also! Pray, friend, what might this cap have cost originally?'—'That, Sir,' says he, 'I don't know; but this cap is all the wages I have for my trouble.'—'A very small recompense truly,' said I. 'Not so very small,' replied he, 'for every gentleman puts some money into it, and I spend the money.'—'What, more money! still more money!'—'Every gentleman gives something, Sir.'—'I'll give thee nothing,' returned I: 'the guardians of the temple should pay you your wages, friend, and not permit you to squeeze thus from every spectator. When we  
 20 pay our money at the door to see a show, we never give more as we are going out. Sure, the guardians of the temple can never think they get enough. Show me the gate; if I stay longer, I may probably meet with more of those ecclesiastical beggars.'

Thus leaving the temple precipitately, I returned to my lodgings, in order to ruminate over what was great, and to despise what was mean, in the occurrences of the day.



## LETTER XXI

### THE CHINESE GOES TO SEE A PLAY

*To the Same*

THE English are as fond of seeing plays acted as the Chinese; but there is a vast difference in the manner of conducting them. We play our pieces in the open air, the English theirs under cover; we act by daylight, they by the blaze of torches. One of our plays continues eight or ten days successively; an English piece seldom takes up above four hours in the representation. 10

My companion in black, with whom I am now beginning to contract an intimacy, introduced me a few nights ago to the play-house, where we placed ourselves conveniently at the foot of the stage. As the curtain was not drawn before my arrival, I had an opportunity of observing the behaviour of the spectators, and indulging those reflections which novelty generally inspires.

The richest in general were placed in the lowest seats, and the poor rose above them in degrees proportioned to their poverty. The order of precedence seemed here 20 inverted; those who were undermost all the day, now enjoyed a temporary eminence, and became masters of the ceremonies. It was they who called for the music, indulging every noisy freedom, and testifying all the insolence of beggary in exaltation.

They who held the middle region seemed not so riotous as those above them, nor yet so tame as those below: to judge by their looks, many of them seemed strangers there as well as myself; they were chiefly employed, during this



period of expectation, in eating oranges, reading the story of the play, or making assignations.

Those who sat in the lowest rows, which are called the pit, seemed to consider themselves as judges of the merit of the poet and the performers; they were assembled partly to be amused, and partly to show their taste: appearing to labour under that restraint which an affectation of superior discernment generally produces. My companion, however, informed me, that not one in an hundred of them knew even  
10 the first principles of criticism; that they assumed the right of being censors, because there was none to contradict their pretensions; and that every man who now called himself a connoisseur, became such to all intents and purposes.

Those who sat in the boxes appeared in the most unhappy situation of all. The rest of the audience came merely for their own amusement; these rather to furnish out a part of the entertainment themselves. I could not avoid considering them as acting parts in dumb show; not a curtsy or nod, that was not the result of art; not a  
20 look nor a smile that was not designed for murder. Gentlemen and ladies ogled each other through spectacles; for my companion observed, that blindness was of late become fashionable; all affected indifference and ease, while their hearts at the same time burned for conquest. Upon the whole, the lights, the music, the ladies in their gayest dresses, the men with cheerfulness and expectation in their looks, all conspired to make a most agreeable picture, and to fill a heart that sympathises at human happiness with an expressible serenity.

30 The expected time for the play to begin at last arrived; the curtain was drawn, and the actors came on. A woman, who personated a queen, came in curtseying to the audience, who clapped their hands upon her appearance. Clapping of hands is, it seems, the manner of applauding in England;



the manner is absurd, but every country, you know, has its peculiar absurdities. I was equally surprised, however, at the submission of the actress, who should have considered herself as a queen, as at the little discernment of the audience, who gave her such marks of applause before she attempted to deserve them. Preliminaries between her and the audience being thus adjusted, the dialogue was supported between her and a most hopeful youth, who acted the part of her confidant. They both appeared in extreme distress, for it seems the queen had lost a child some fifteen years 10 before, and still kept its dear resemblance next her heart, while her kind companion bore a part in her sorrows.

Her lamentations grew loud ; comfort is offered, but she detests the very sound : she bids them preach comfort to the winds. Upon this her husband comes in, who, seeing the queen so much afflicted, can himself hardly refrain from tears, or avoid partaking in the soft distress. After thus grieving through three scenes, the curtain dropped for the first act.

‘Truly,’ said I to my companion, ‘these kings and queens 20 are very much disturbed at no very great misfortune : certain I am, were people of humbler stations to act in this manner, they would be thought divested of common sense.’ I had scarce finished this observation, when the curtain rose, and the king came on in a violent passion. His wife had, it seems, refused his proffered tenderness, had spurned his royal embrace ; and he seemed resolved not to survive her fierce disdain. After he had thus fretted, and the queen had fretted through the second act, the curtain was let down once more. 30

‘Now,’ says my companion, ‘you perceive the king to be a man of spirit ; he feels at every pore : one of your phlegmatic sons of clay would have given the queen her own way, and let her come to herself by degrees ; but the



king is for immediate tenderness, or instant death: death and tenderness are leading passions of every modern buskined hero; this moment they embrace and the next stab, mixing daggers and kisses in every period.'

I was going to second his remarks, when my attention was engrossed by a new object; a man came in balancing a straw upon his nose, and the audience were clapping their hands in all the raptures of applause. 'To what purpose,' cried I, 'does this unmeaning figure make his appearance? is  
10 he a part of the plot?' 'Unmeaning do you call him?' replied my friend in black; 'this is one of the most important characters of the whole play; nothing pleases the people more than the seeing a straw balanced: there is a great deal of meaning in the straw; there is something suited to every apprehension in the sight; and a fellow possessed of talents like these is sure of making his fortune.'

The third act now began with an actor who came to inform us, that he was the villain of the play, and intended to show strange things before all was over. He was joined  
20 by another, who seemed as much disposed for mischief as he; their intrigues continued through this whole division. 'If that be a villain,' said I, 'he must be a very stupid one to tell his secrets without being asked; such soliloquies of late are never admitted in China.'

The noise of clapping interrupted me once more; a child of six years old was learning to dance on the stage, which gave the ladies and mandarins infinite satisfaction. 'I am sorry,' said I, 'to see the pretty creature so early learning so bad a trade; dancing being, I presume, as contemptible  
30 here as it is in China.' 'Quite the reverse,' interrupted my companion; 'dancing is a very reputable and genteel employment here; men have a greater chance for encouragement from the merit of their heels than their heads. One who jumps up and flourishes his toes three times



before he comes to the ground may have three hundred a year; he who flourishes them four times gets four hundred; but he who arrives at five is inestimable, and may demand what salary he thinks proper. The female dancers, too, are valued for this sort of jumping and crossing; and it is a cant word among them, that she deserves most who shows highest. But the fourth act is begun, let us be attentive.'

In the fourth act the queen finds her long-lost child, now grown up into a youth of smart parts and great 10 qualifications; wherefore she wisely considers that the crown will fit his head better than that of her husband, whom she knows to be a driveller. The king discovers her design, and here comes on the deep distress: he loves the queen, and he loves the kingdom; he resolves therefore, in order to possess both, that her son must die. The queen exclaims at his barbarity, is frantic with rage, and at length, overcome with sorrow, falls into a fit; upon which the curtain drops, and the act is concluded.

'Observe the art of the poet,' cries my companion. 'When 20 the queen can say no more, she falls into a fit. While thus her eyes are shut, while she is supported in the arms of Abigail, what horrors do we not fancy! We feel it in every nerve; take my word for it, that fits are the true aposiopesis of modern tragedy.'

The fifth act began, and a busy piece it was. Scenes shifting, trumpets sounding, mobs hallooing, carpets spreading, guards bustling from one door to another; gods, demons, daggers, racks, and ratsbane. But whether the king was killed, or the queen was drowned, or the son was 30 poisoned, I have absolutely forgotten.

When the play was over, I could not avoid observing that the persons of the drama appeared in as much distress in the first act as the last. 'How is it possible,' said I, 'to



sympathize with them through five long acts? Pity is but a short-lived passion; I hate to hear an actor mouthing trifles; neither startings, strainings, nor attitudes affect me, unless there be cause: after I have been once or twice deceived by those unmeaning alarms, my heart sleeps in peace, probably unaffected by the principal distress. There should be one great passion aimed at by the actor as well as the poet; all the rest should be subordinate, and only contribute to make that the greater: if the actor, therefore,  
10 exclaims upon every occasion in the tones of despair, he attempts to move us too soon; he anticipates the blow, he ceases to affect, though he gains our applause.'

I scarce perceived that the audience were almost all departed; wherefore, mixing with the crowd, my companion and I got into the street, where, essaying an hundred obstacles from coach-wheels and palanquin poles, like birds in their flight through the branches of a forest, after various turnings, we both at length got home in safety. Adieu.

20

## LETTER XXVI

THE CHARACTER OF THE MAN IN BLACK, WITH SOME  
INSTANCES OF HIS INCONSISTENT CONDUCT

*From the Same*

THOUGH fond of many acquaintances, I desire an intimacy only with a few. The man in black, whom I have often mentioned, is one whose friendship I could wish to acquire, because he possesses my esteem. His manners, it is true, are tinged with some strange inconsistencies; and he may be justly termed an humorist in a nation of humor-  
30 ists. Though he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence;



though his conversation be replete with the most sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is dilated with the most unbounded love. I have known him profess himself a man-hater, while his cheek was glowing with compassion; and, while his looks were softened into pity, I have heard him use the language of the most unbounded ill-nature. Some affect humanity and tenderness, others boast of having such dispositions from nature; but he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence. He takes as much pains to hide his feelings as any 10 hypocrite would to conceal his indifference; but on every unguarded moment the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.

In one of our late excursions into the country, happening to discourse upon the provision that was made for the poor in England, he seemed amazed how any of his countrymen could be so foolishly weak as to relieve occasional objects of charity, when the laws had made such ample provision for their support. 'In every parish-house,' says he, 'the poor are supplied with food, clothes, fire, and a bed to lie on; 20 they want no more, I desire no more myself; yet still they seem discontented. I am surprised at the inactivity of our magistrates, in not taking up such vagrants, who are only a weight upon the industrious: I am surprised that the people are found to relieve them, when they must be at the same time sensible, that it in some measure encourages idleness, extravagance, and imposture. Were I to advise any man for whom I had the least regard, I would caution him by all means not to be imposed upon by their false pretences: let me assure you, Sir, they are impostors, every 30 one of them, and rather merit a prison than relief.'

He was proceeding in this strain earnestly to dissuade me from an imprudence of which I am seldom guilty, when an old man, who still had about him the remnants of tattered



finery, implored our compassion. He assured us that he was no common beggar, but forced into the shameful profession, to support a dying wife and five hungry children. Being prepossessed against such falsehoods, his story had not the least influence upon me; but it was quite otherwise with the man in black: I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance, and effectually interrupt his harangue. I could easily perceive that his heart burned to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover  
10 his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way, and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same time, in order that I should hear, go work for his bread, and not tease passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.

As he had fancied himself quite unperceived, he continued, as we proceeded, to rail against beggars with as much animosity as before: he threw in some episodes on his own amazing prudence and economy, with his profound skill in dis-  
20 covering impostors; he explained the manner in which he would deal with beggars, were he a magistrate; hinted at enlarging some of the prisons for their reception, and told two stories of ladies that were robbed by beggarmen. He was beginning a third to the same purpose, when a sailor with a wooden leg once more crossed our walks, desiring our pity, and blessing our limbs. I was for going on without taking any notice, but my friend looking wishfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would show me with how much ease he could at any time detect an impostor.

30 He now, therefore, assumed a look of importance, and in an angry tone began to examine the sailor, demanding in what engagement he was thus disabled and rendered unfit for service. The sailor replied in a tone as angrily as he, that he had been an officer on board a private ship of war,



and that he had lost his leg abroad, in defence of those who did nothing at home. At this reply, all my friend's importance vanished in a moment; he had not a single question more to ask: he now only studied what method he should take to relieve him unobserved. He had, however, no easy part to act, as he was obliged to preserve the appearance of ill-nature before me, and yet relieve himself by relieving the sailor. Casting, therefore, a furious look upon some bundles of chips which the fellow carried in a string at his back, my friend demanded how he sold his 10 matches; but, not waiting for a reply, desired in a surly tone to have a shilling's worth. The sailor seemed at first surprised at his demand, but soon recollecting himself, and presenting his whole bundle, 'Here master,' says he, 'take all my cargo, and a blessing into the bargain.'

It is impossible to describe with what an air of triumph my friend marched off with his new purchase: he assured me, that he was firmly of opinion that those fellows must have stolen their goods, who could thus afford to sell them for half value. He informed me of several different uses to 20 which those chips might be applied; he expatiated largely upon the savings that would result from lighting candles with a match, instead of thrusting them into the fire. He averred, that he would as soon have parted with a tooth as his money to those vagabonds, unless for some valuable consideration. I cannot tell how long this panegyric upon frugality and matches might have continued, had not his attention been called off by another object more distressful than either of the former. A woman in rags, with one child in her arms, and another on her 30 back, was attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice, that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. A wretch, who in the deepest distress still aimed at good-humour, was an object my



friend was by no means capable of withstanding : his vivacity and his discourse were instantly interrupted ; upon this occasion his very dissimulation had forsaken him. Even in my presence he immediately applied his hand to his pockets, in order to relieve her ; but guess his confusion, when he found he had already given away all the money he carried about him to former objects. The misery painted in the woman's visage was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his. He continued to  
10 search for some time, but to no purpose, till, at length recollecting himself, with a face of ineffable good-nature, as he had no money, he put into her hands his shilling's worth of matches.

## LETTER XXVII

## THE HISTORY OF THE MAN IN BLACK

*To the Same*

As there appeared something reluctantly good in the character of my companion, I must own it surprised me what could be his motives for thus concealing virtues  
20 which others take such pains to display. I was unable to repress my desire of knowing the history of a man who thus seemed to act under continual restraint, and whose benevolence was rather the effect of appetite than reason.

It was not, however, till after repeated solicitations he thought proper to gratify my curiosity. 'If you are fond', says he, 'of hearing hair-breadth 'scapes, my history must certainly please ; for I have been for twenty years upon the very verge of starving, without ever being starved.'

'My father, the younger son of a good family, was  
30 possessed of a small living in the Church. His education was above his fortune, and his generosity greater than his



education. Poor as he was, he had his flatterers still poorer than himself; for every dinner he gave them, they returned an equivalent in praise; and this was all he wanted. The same ambition that actuates a monarch at the head of an army influenced my father at the head of his table; he told the story of the ivy-tree, and that was laughed at; he repeated the jest of the two scholars and one pair of breeches, and the company laughed at that; but the story of Taffy in the sedan chair was sure to set the table in a roar: thus his pleasure increased in proportion to the 10 pleasure he gave; he loved all the world, and he fancied all the world loved him.

‘As his fortune was but small, he lived up to the very extent of it: he had no intentions of leaving his children money, for that was dross; he was resolved they should have learning, for learning, he used to observe, was better than silver or gold. For this purpose, he undertook to instruct us himself; and took as much pains to form our morals as to improve our understanding. We were told, that universal benevolence was what first cemented society; 20 we were taught to consider all the wants of mankind as our own; to regard “the human face divine” with affection and esteem; he wound us up to be mere machines of pity, and rendered us incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse, made either by real or fictitious distress; in a word, we were perfectly instructed in the art of giving away thousands, before we were taught the more necessary qualifications of getting a farthing.

‘I cannot avoid imagining, that thus refined by his lessons out of all my suspicion, and divested of even all the 30 little cunning which nature had given me, I resembled, upon my first entrance into the busy and insidious world, one of those gladiators who were exposed without armour in the amphitheatre at Rome. My father, however, who had



only seen the world on one side, seemed to triumph in my superior discernment; though my whole stock of wisdom consisted in being able to talk like himself upon subjects that once were useful, because they were then topics of the busy world, but that now were utterly useless, because connected with the busy world no longer.

‘The first opportunity he had of finding his expectations disappointed was at the very middling figure I made in the university: he had flattered himself that he should soon see  
10 me rising into the foremost rank in literary reputation, but was mortified to find me utterly unnoticed and unknown. His disappointment might have been partly ascribed to his having over-rated my talents, and partly to my dislike of mathematical reasonings, at a time when my imagination and memory, yet unsatisfied, were more eager after new objects than desirous of reasoning upon those I knew. This did not, however, please my tutors, who observed, indeed, that I was a little dull; but at the same time allowed, that I seemed to be very good-natured, and had no  
20 harm in me.

‘After I had resided at college seven years, my father died, and left me—his blessing. Thus shoved from shore, without ill-nature to protect, or cunning to guide, or proper stores to subsist me in so dangerous a voyage, I was obliged to embark in the wide world at twenty-two. But, in order to settle in life, my friends advised (for they always advise when they begin to despise us), they advised me, I say, to go into orders.

‘To be obliged to wear a long wig when I liked a short  
30 one, or a black coat when I generally dressed in brown, I thought was such a restraint upon my liberty, that I absolutely rejected the proposal. A priest in England is not the same mortified creature with a bonze in China; with us, not he that fasts best, but eats best, is reckoned



the best liver; yet I rejected a life of luxury, indolence, and ease, from no other consideration but that boyish one of dress. So that my friends were now perfectly satisfied I was undone; and yet they thought it a pity for one who had not the least harm in him, and was so very good-natured.

‘Poverty naturally begets dependence, and I was admitted as flatterer to a great man. At first I was surprised, that the situation of a flatterer at a great man’s table could be thought disagreeable; there was no great trouble in listening attentively when his lordship spoke, and laughing 10 when he looked round for applause. This even good manners might have obliged me to perform. I found, however, too soon, that his lordship was a greater dunce than myself; and from that very moment my power of flattery was at an end. I now rather aimed at setting him right, than at receiving his absurdities with submission: to flatter those we do not know is an easy task; but to flatter our intimate acquaintances, all whose foibles are strongly in our eye, is drudgery insupportable. Every time I now opened my lips in praise, my falsehood went to my conscience; 20 his lordship soon perceived me to be unfit for service; I was therefore discharged; my patron at the same time being graciously pleased to observe, that he believed I was tolerably good-natured, and had not the least harm in me.

‘Disappointed in ambition, I had recourse to love. A young lady, who lived with her aunt, and was possessed of a pretty fortune in her own disposal, had given me, as I fancied, some reasons to expect success. The symptoms by which I was guided were striking. She had always laughed with me at her awkward acquaintance, and at her aunt 30 among the number; she always observed, that a man of sense would make a better husband than a fool, and I as constantly applied the observation in my own favour. She continually talked, in my company, of friendship and the



beauties of the mind, and spoke of Mr. Shrimp my rival's high-heeled shoes with detestation. These were circumstances which I thought strongly in my favour; so, after resolving, and re-resolving, I had courage enough to tell her my mind. Miss heard my proposal with serenity, seeming at the same time to study the figures of her fan. Out at last it came. There was but one small objection to complete our happiness; which was no more, than—that she was married three months before to Mr. Shrimp, with high-heeled shoes!

10 By way of consolation, however, she observed, that, though I was disappointed in her, my addresses to her aunt would probably kindle her into sensibility; as the old lady always allowed me to be very good-natured, and not to have the least share of harm in me.

‘Yet still I had friends, numerous friends, and to them I was resolved to apply. O friendship! thou fond soother of the human breast, to thee we fly in every calamity; to thee the wretched seek for succour; on thee the care-tired son of misery fondly relies; from thy kind assistance the un-

20 fortunate always hopes relief, and may be ever sure of—disappointment! My first application was to a city-scrivener, who had frequently offered to lend me money when he knew I did not want it. I informed him, that now was the time to put his friendship to the test; that I wanted to borrow a couple of hundreds for a certain occasion, and was resolved to take it up from him. “And pray, Sir,” cried my friend, “do you want all this money?” “Indeed I never wanted it more,” returned I. “I am sorry for that,” cries the scrivener, “with all my heart; for they

30 who want money when they come to borrow, will always want money when they should come to pay.”

‘From him I flew with indignation to one of the best friends I had in the world, and made the same request. “Indeed, Mr. Drybone,” cries my friend, “I always thought



it would come to this. You know, Sir, I would not advise you but for your own good ; but your conduct has hitherto been ridiculous in the highest degree, and some of your acquaintance always thought you a very silly fellow. Let me see, you want two hundred pounds. Do you want only two hundred, Sir, exactly?" "To confess a truth," returned I, "I shall want three hundred ; but then I have another friend, from whom I can borrow the rest." "Why, then," replied my friend, "if you would take my advice (and you know I should not presume to advise you but for your own 10 good), I would recommend it to you to borrow the whole sum from that other friend ; and then one note will serve for all, you know."

' Poverty now began to come fast upon me ; yet instead of growing more provident or cautious as I grew poor, I became every day more indolent and simple. A friend was arrested for fifty pounds ; I was unable to extricate him except by becoming his bail. When at liberty, he fled from his creditors, and left me to take his place. In prison I expected greater satisfactions than I had enjoyed at large. 20 I hoped to converse with men in this new world, simple and believing like myself ; but I found them as cunning and as cautious as those in the world I had left behind. They spunged up my money whilst it lasted, borrowed my coals, and never paid for them, and cheated me when I played at cribbage. All this was done because they believed me to be very good-natured, and knew that I had no harm in me.

' Upon my first entrance into this mansion, which is to some the abode of despair, I felt no sensations different from those I experienced abroad. I was now on one side 30 the door, and those who were unconfined were on the other : this was all the difference between us. At first, indeed, I felt some uneasiness, in considering how I should be able to provide this week for the wants of the week ensuing ; but



after some time, if I found myself sure of eating one day, I never troubled my head how I was to be supplied another. I seized every precarious meal with the utmost good-humour; indulged no rants of spleen at my situation; never called down heaven and all the stars to behold me dining upon an halfpenny-worth of radishes; my very companions were taught to believe that I liked salad better than mutton. I contented myself with thinking, that all my life I should either eat white bread or brown; considered that all that  
10 happened was best; laughed when I was not in pain, took the world as it went, and read Tacitus often, for want of more books and company.

‘How long I might have continued in this torpid state of simplicity I cannot tell, had I not been roused by seeing an old acquaintance, whom I knew to be a prudent blockhead, preferred to a place in the government. I now found that I had pursued a wrong track, and that the true way of being able to relieve others was first to aim at independence myself: my immediate care, therefore, was to leave my  
20 present habitation, and make an entire reformation in my conduct and behaviour. For a free, open, undesigning deportment, I put on that of closeness, prudence, and economy. One of the most heroic actions I ever performed, and for which I shall praise myself as long as I live, was the refusing half-a-crown to an old acquaintance, at the time when he wanted it, and I had it to spare: for this alone I deserve to be decreed an ovation.

‘I now therefore pursued a course of uninterrupted frugality, seldom wanted a dinner, and was consequently  
30 invited to twenty. I soon began to get the character of a saving hunk that had money, and insensibly grew into esteem. Neighbours have asked my advice in the disposal of their daughters; and I have always taken care not to give any. I have contracted a friendship with an alderman,



only by observing, that if we take a farthing from a thousand pounds, it will be a thousand pounds no longer. I have been invited to a pawnbroker's table, by pretending to hate gravy ; and am now actually upon treaty of marriage with a rich widow, for only having observed that the bread was rising. If ever I am asked a question, whether I know it or not, instead of answering, I only smile and look wise. If a charity is proposed, I go about with the hat, but put nothing in myself. If a wretch solicits my pity, I observe that the world is filled with impostors, and take a certain method of **10** not being deceived, by never relieving. In short, I now find the truest way of finding esteem, even from the indigent, is—to give away nothing, and thus have much in our power to give.'

## LETTER XXIX

### A DESCRIPTION OF A CLUB OF AUTHORS

*From the Same*

WERE we to estimate the learning of the English by the number of books that are every day published among them, perhaps no country, not even China itself, could **20** equal them in this particular. I have reckoned not less than twenty-three new books published in one day ; which, upon computation, makes eight thousand three hundred and ninety-five in one year. Most of these are not confined to one single science, but embrace the whole circle. History, politics, poetry, mathematics, metaphysics, and the philosophy of nature, are all comprised in a manual not larger than that in which our children are taught the letters. If, then, we suppose the learned of England to read but an eighth part of the works which daily come from the press—and sure **30** none can pretend to learning upon less easy terms—at this



rate, every scholar will read a thousand books in one year. From such a calculation you may conjecture what an amazing fund of literature a man must be possessed of, who thus reads three new books every day, not one of which but contains all the good things that ever were said or written.

And yet I know not how it happens, but the English are not in reality so learned as would seem from this calculation. We meet but few who know all arts and sciences to  
10 perfection; whether it is that the generality are incapable of such extensive knowledge, or that the authors of those books are not adequate instructors. In China, the emperor himself takes cognizance of all the doctors in the kingdom who profess authorship. In England, every man may be an author that can write; for they have by law a liberty not only of saying what they please, but of being also as dull as they please.

Yesterday, I testified my surprise to the man in black, where writers could be found in sufficient number to throw  
20 off the books I daily saw crowding from the press. I at first imagined that their learned seminaries might take this method of instructing the world. But to obviate this objection, my companion assured me, that the doctors of colleges never wrote, and that some of them had actually forgot their reading: 'But if you desire,' continued he, 'to see a collection of authors, I fancy I can introduce you this evening to a club, which assembles every Saturday at seven, at the sign of "The Broom" near Islington, to talk over the business of the last, and the entertainment of the  
30 week ensuing.' I accepted his invitation; we walked together, and entered the house some time before the usual hour for the company assembling.

My friend took this opportunity of letting me into the characters of the principal members of the club, not even the



host excepted ; who, it seems, was once an author himself, but preferred by a bookseller to this situation as a reward for his former services.

‘The first person,’ said he, ‘of our society is Doctor Nonentity, a metaphysician. Most people think him a profound scholar ; but as he seldom speaks, I cannot be positive in that particular ; he generally spreads himself before the fire, sucks his pipe, talks little, drinks much, and is reckoned very good company. I’m told he writes indexes to perfection ; he makes essays on the origin of evil, 10 philosophical inquiries upon any subject, and draws up an answer to any book upon twenty-four hours’ warning. You may distinguish him from the rest of the company by his long grey wig, and the blue handkerchief round his neck.

‘The next to him in merit and esteem is Tim Syllabub, a droll creature ; he sometimes shines as a star of the first magnitude among the choice spirits of the age : he is reckoned equally excellent at a rebus, a riddle, a bawdy song, and an hymn for the Tabernacle. You will know him by his shabby finery, his powdered wig, dirty shirt, and 20 broken silk stockings.

‘After him succeeds Mr. Tibbs, a very useful hand ; he writes receipts for the bite of a mad dog, and throws off an eastern tale to perfection ; he understands the business of an author as well as any man, for no bookseller alive can cheat him. You may distinguish him by the peculiar clumsiness of his figure, and the coarseness of his coat : however, though it be coarse (as he frequently tells the company), he has paid for it.

‘Lawyer Squint is the politician of the society : he makes 30 speeches for Parliament, writes addresses to his fellow-subjects, and letters to noble commanders ; he gives the history of every new play, and finds “seasonable thoughts” upon every occasion.’ My companion was proceeding in



his description, when the host came running in, with terror on his countenance, to tell us that the door was beset with bailiffs. 'If that be the case then,' says my companion, 'we had as good be going; for I am positive we shall not see one of the company this night.' Wherefore, disappointed, we were both obliged to return home: he to enjoy the oddities which compose his character alone, and I to write as usual to my friend the occurrences of the day. Adieu.

## LETTER XXX

## 10 THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB OF AUTHORS

*From the Same*

By my last advices from Moscow, I find the caravan has not yet departed for China. I still continue to write, expecting that you may receive a large number of my letters at once. In them you will find rather a minute detail of English peculiarities, than a general picture of their manners or disposition. Happy it were for mankind if all travellers would thus, instead of characterizing a people in general terms, lead us into a detail of those minute circumstances  
20 which first influenced their opinion. The genius of a country should be investigated with a kind of experimental inquiry; by this means we should have more precise and just notions of foreign nations, and detect travellers themselves when they happened to form wrong conclusions.

My friend and I repeated our visit to the Club of Authors; where, upon our entrance, we found the members all assembled and engaged in a loud debate.

The poet, in shabby finery, holding a manuscript in his hand, was earnestly endeavouring to persuade the company  
30 to hear him read the first book of an heroic poem, which he had composed the day before. But against this all the



members very warmly objected. They knew no reason why any member of the club should be indulged with a particular hearing, when many of them had published whole volumes which had never been looked in. They insisted that the law should be observed, where reading in company was expressly noticed. It was in vain that the plaintiff pleaded the peculiar merit of his piece: he spoke to an assembly insensible to all his remonstrances; the book of laws was opened, and read by the secretary, where it was expressly enacted, 'That whatsoever poet, speech-maker, critic, or 10 historian, should presume to engage the company by reading his own works, he was to lay down sixpence previous to opening the manuscript, and should be charged one shilling an hour while he continued reading: the said shilling to be equally distributed among the company as a recompense for their trouble.'

Our poet seemed at first to shrink at the penalty, hesitating for some time whether he should deposit the fine, or shut up the poem; but looking round, and perceiving two strangers in the room, his love of fame outweighed his 20 prudence, and laying down the sum by law established, he insisted on his prerogative.

A profound silence ensuing, he began by explaining his design. 'Gentlemen,' says he, 'the present piece is not one of your common epic poems, which come from the press like paper kites in summer: there are none of your Turnuses or Didos in it; it is an heroical description of Nature. I only beg you'll endeavour to make your souls in unison with mine, and hear with the same enthusiasm with which I have written. The poem begins with the description of an author's bed- 30 chamber: the picture was sketched in my own apartment; for you must know, gentlemen, that I am myself the hero.' Then putting himself into the attitude of an orator, with all the emphasis of voice and action, he proceeded:



Where the Red Lion flaring o'er the way,  
Invites each passing stranger that can pay;  
Where Calvert's butt, and Parson's black champagne,  
Regale the drabs and bloods of Drury-lane;  
There in a lonely room, from bailiffs snug,  
The muse found Scroggen stretch'd beneath a rug.  
A window patch'd with paper lent a ray,  
That dimly show'd the state in which he lay:  
The sanded floor that grits beneath the tread;  
10 The humid wall with paltry pictures spread;  
The royal game of goose was there in view,  
And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew;  
The seasons fram'd with listing found a place,  
And brave prince William show'd his lamp-black face:  
The morn was cold, he views with keen desire  
The rusty grate, unconscious of a fire;  
With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scored,  
And five crack'd tea-cups dress'd the chimney board,  
A night-cap deck'd his brows instead of bay,  
20 A cap by night—a stocking all the day!

With this last line he seemed so much elated, that he was unable to proceed. 'There, gentlemen,' cries he, 'there is a description for you; Rabelais's bed-chamber is but a fool to it.

A cap by night—a stocking all the day!

there is sound and sense, and truth, and nature, in the trifling compass of ten little syllables.'

He was too much employed in self-admiration to observe the company; who, by nods, winks, shrugs, and stifled  
30 laughter, testified every mark of contempt. He turned severally to each for their opinion, and found all, however, ready to applaud. One swore it was inimitable; another said it was damn'd fine; and a third cried out in a rapture, Carissimo! At last, addressing himself to the president, 'and pray Mr Squint,' says he, 'let us have your opinion.'



‘Mine!’ answered the president, taking the manuscript out of the author’s hand,—‘may this glass suffocate me, but I think it equal to anything I have seen; and I fancy,’ continued he, doubling up the poem, and forcing it into the author’s pocket, ‘that you will get great honour when it comes out: so I shall beg leave to put it in. We will not intrude upon your good-nature, in desiring to hear more of it at present; *ex ungue Herculem*, we are satisfied, perfectly satisfied.’ The author made two or three attempts to pull it out a second time, and the president made as many to 10 prevent him. Thus, though with reluctance, he was at last obliged to sit down, contented with the commendations for which he had paid.

When this tempest of poetry and praise was blown over, one of the company changed the subject, by wondering how any man could be so dull as to write poetry at present, since prose itself would hardly pay: ‘Would you think it, gentlemen,’ continued he, ‘I have actually written last week sixteen prayers, twelve bawdy jests, and three sermons, all at the rate of sixpence apiece; and what is still more 20 extraordinary, the bookseller has lost by the bargain. Such sermons would once have gained me a prebend’s stall; but now, alas, we have neither piety, taste, nor humour among us. Positively, if this season does not turn out better than it has begun, unless the ministry commit some blunders to furnish us with a new topic of abuse, I shall resume my old business of working at the press, instead of finding it employment.’

The whole club seemed to join in condemning the season, as one of the worst that had come for some time: a gentleman 30 particularly observed, that the nobility were never known to subscribe worse than at present. ‘I know not how it happens,’ said he, ‘though I follow them up as close as possible, yet I can hardly get a single subscription in a



week. The houses of the great are as inaccessible as a frontier garrison at midnight. I never see a nobleman's door half-opened, that some surly porter or footman does not stand full in the breach. I was yesterday to wait with a subscription-proposal upon my Lord Squash the creolian. I had posted myself at his door the whole morning, and just as he was getting into his coach, thrust my proposal snug into his hand, folded up in the form of a letter from myself. He just glanced at the superscription, and not  
10 knowing the hand, consigned it to his valet-de-chambre; this respectable personage treated it as his master, and put it into the hands of the porter; the porter grasped my proposal frowning; and measuring my figure from top to toe, put it back into my own hands unopened.'

'To the devil I pitch all the nobility!' cries a little man, in a peculiar accent: 'I am sure they have of late used me most scurvily. You must know, gentlemen, some time ago, upon the arrival of a certain noble duke from his travels, I set myself down, and vamped up a fine flaunting poetical  
20 panegyric, which I had written in such a strain, that I fancied it would have even wheedled milk from a mouse. In this I represented the whole kingdom welcoming his grace to his native soil, not forgetting the loss France and Italy would sustain in their arts by his departure. I expected to touch for a bank-bill at least; so folding up my verses in gilt-paper, I gave my last half-crown to a genteel servant to be the bearer. My letter was safely conveyed to his grace, and the servant, after four hours' absence, during which time I led the life of a fiend, returned with a letter  
30 four times as big as mine. Guess my ecstasy at the prospect of so fine a return. I eagerly took the packet into my hands, that trembled to receive it. I kept it some time unopened before me, brooding over the expected treasure it contained; when opening it, as I hope to be saved, gentlemen, his grace



had sent me in payment for my poem, no bank-bills, but six copies of verse, each longer than mine, addressed to him upon the same occasion.'

'A nobleman,' cries a member, who had hitherto been silent, 'is created as much for the confusion of us authors as the catch-pole. I'll tell you a story, gentlemen, which is as true as that this pipe is made of clay. When I was delivered of my first book, I owed my tailor for a suit of clothes; but that is nothing new, you know, and may be any man's case as well as mine. Well, owing him for a 10 suit of clothes, and hearing that my book took very well, he sent for his money, and insisted upon being paid immediately: though I was at that time rich in fame, for my book run like wildfire, yet I was very short in money, and being unable to satisfy his demand, prudently resolved to keep my chamber, preferring a prison of my own choosing at home, to one of my tailor's choosing abroad. In vain the bailiffs used all their arts to decoy me from my citadel; in vain they sent to let me know that a gentleman wanted to speak with me at the next tavern; in vain they came 20 with an urgent message from my aunt in the country; in vain I was told that a particular friend was at the point of death, and desired to take his last farewell: I was deaf, insensible, rock, adamant; the bailiffs could make no impression on my hard heart, for I effectually kept my liberty by never stirring out of the room.

'This was very well for a fortnight; when one morning I received a most splendid message from the Earl of Doomsday, importing that he had read my book, and was in raptures with every line of it; he impatiently longed to see 30 the author, and had some designs which might turn out greatly to my advantage. I paused upon the contents of this message, and found there could be no deceit, for the card was gilt at the edges, and the bearer, I was told, had



quite the looks of a gentleman. Witness, ye powers, how my heart triumphed at my own importance! I saw a long perspective of felicity before me; I applauded the taste of the times, which never saw genius forsaken; I had prepared a set introductory speech for the occasion, five glaring compliments for his lordship, and two more modest for myself. The next morning, therefore, in order to be punctual to my appointment, I took coach, and ordered the fellow to drive to the street and house mentioned in his  
10 lordship's address. I had the precaution to pull up the window as I went along, to keep off the busy part of mankind, and, big with expectation, fancied the coach never went fast enough. At length, however, the wished-for moment of its stopping arrived: this for some time I impatiently expected, and letting down the window in a transport, in order to take a previous view of his lordship's magnificent palace and situation, I found—poison to my sight! I found myself, not in an elegant street, but a paltry lane; not at a nobleman's door, but the door of a spunging-  
20 house: I found the coachman had all this while been driving me to jail, and I saw the bailiff with a devil's face, coming out to secure me.'

To a philosopher no circumstance, however trifling, is too minute; he finds instruction and entertainment in occurrences, which are passed over by the rest of mankind as low, trite, and indifferent; it is from the number of these particulars, which to many appear insignificant, that he is at last enabled to form general conclusions; this, therefore, must be my excuse for sending so far as China, accounts of  
30 manners and follies, which, though minute in their own nature, serve more truly to characterize this people than histories of their public treaties, courts, ministers, negotiations, and ambassadors. Adieu.



## LETTER LI

### A BOOKSELLER'S VISIT TO THE CHINESE

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, First President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, in China*

As I was yesterday seated at breakfast over a pensive dish of tea, my meditations were interrupted by my old friend and companion, who introduced a stranger, dressed pretty much like himself. The gentleman made several apologies for his visit, begged of me to impute his intrusion to the sincerity of his respect, and the warmth of his curiosity. 10

As I am very suspicious of my company when I find them very civil without any apparent reason, I answered the stranger's caresses at first with reserve ; which my friend perceiving, instantly let me into my visitant's trade and character, asking Mr. Fudge, whether he had lately published anything new ? I now conjectured that my guest was no other than a bookseller, and his answer confirmed my suspicions.

'Excuse me, Sir,' says he, 'it is not the season ; books have their time as well as cucumbers. I would no more 20 bring out a new work in summer than I would sell pork in the dog-days. Nothing in my way goes off in summer, except very light goods indeed. A review, a magazine, or a sessions paper may amuse a summer reader ; but all our stock of value we reserve for a spring and winter trade.' 'I must confess, Sir,' says I, 'a curiosity to know what you call a valuable stock, which can only bear a winter perusal.' 'Sir,' replied the bookseller, 'it is not my way to cry up my own goods ; but, without exaggeration, I will venture to show with any of the trade : my books at least have the 30 peculiar advantage of being always new ; and it is my way to clear off my old to the trunk-makers every season. I have



ten new title-pages now about me, which only want books to be added to make them the finest things in nature. Others may pretend to direct the vulgar; but that is not my way; I always let the vulgar direct me; wherever popular clamour arises, I always echo the million. For instance, should the people in general say that such a man is a rogue, I instantly give orders to set him down in print a villain; thus every man buys the book, not to learn new sentiments, but to have the pleasure of seeing his own  
10 reflected.' 'But, Sir,' interrupted I, 'you speak as if you yourself wrote the books you publish; may I be so bold as to ask a sight of some of those intended publications which are shortly to surprise the world?' 'As to that, Sir,' replied the talkative bookseller, 'I only draw out the plans myself; and though I am very cautious of communicating them to any, yet, as in the end I have a favour to ask, you shall see a few of them. Here, Sir, here they are, diamonds of the first water, I assure you. *Imprimis*, a translation of several medical precepts, for the use of such physicians as  
20 do not understand Latin. *Item*, the young clergyman's art of placing patches regularly, with a dissertation on the different manner of smiling without distorting the face. *Item*, the whole art of love made perfectly easy, by a broker of 'Change Alley. *Item*, the proper manner of cutting black-lead pencils, and making crayons; by the right hon. the Earl of \* \* \*. *Item*, the muster-master general, or the review of reviews—' 'Sir,' cried I, interrupting him, 'my curiosity with regard to title-pages is satisfied, I should be glad to see some longer manuscript, a history, or an epic  
30 poem.' 'Bless me,' cries the man of industry, 'now you speak of an epic poem, you shall see an excellent farce. Here it is; dip into it where you will, it will be found replete with true modern humour. Strokes, Sir; it is filled with strokes of wit and satire in every line.' 'Do you call



these dashes of the pen strokes,' replied I, 'for I must confess I can see no other?' 'And pray, Sir,' returned he, 'what do you call them? Do you see anything good nowadays that is not filled with strokes—and dashes?—Sir, a well-placed dash makes half the wit of our writers of modern humour. I bought last season a piece that had no other merit upon earth than nine hundred and ninety-five breaks, seventy-two ha-ha's, three good things, and a garter. And yet it played off, and bounced, and cracked, and made more sport than a firework.' 'I fancy then, Sir, you were a 10 considerable gainer?' 'It must be owned the piece did pay: but, upon the whole, I cannot much boast of last winter's success; I gained by two murders, but then I lost by an ill-timed charity sermon. I was a considerable sufferer by my Direct Road to an Estate, but the Infernal Guide brought me up again. Ah, Sir, there was a piece touched off by the hand of a master, filled with good things from one end to the other. The author had nothing but the jest in view; no dull moral lurking beneath, nor ill-natured satire to sour the reader's good-humour; he wisely considered, 20 that moral and humour at the same time were quite overdoing the business.' 'To what purpose was the book then published?' cried I. 'Sir, the book was published in order to be sold; and no book sold better, except the criticisms upon it, which came out soon after: of all kinds of writings that goes off best at present; and I generally fasten a criticism upon every selling book that is published.

'I once had an author who never left the least opening for the critics: close was the word, always very right, and very dull, ever on the safe side of an argument; yet, with 30 all his qualifications, incapable of coming into favour. I soon perceived that his bent was for criticism; and, as he was good for nothing else, supplied him with pens and paper, and planted him at the beginning of every month as a censor



on the works of others. In short, I found him a treasure ; no merit could escape him : but what is most remarkable of all, he ever wrote best and bitterest when drunk.' ' But are there not some works,' interrupted I, ' that from the very manner of their composition must be exempt from criticism ; particularly such as profess to disregard its laws ? ' ' There is no work whatsoever but he can criticize,' replied the bookseller ; ' even though you wrote in Chinese he would have a pluck at you. Suppose you should take it into your head  
10 to publish a book, let it be a volume of Chinese Letters, for instance ; write how you will, he shall show the world you could have written better. Should you, with the most local exactness, stick to the manners and customs of the country from whence you come ; should you confine yourself to the narrow limits of eastern knowledge, and be perfectly simple, and perfectly natural, he has then the strongest reason to exclaim. He may with a sneer send you back to China for readers. He may observe, that after the first or second letter, the iteration of the same simplicity is insup-  
20 portably tedious ; but the worst of all is, the public in such a case will anticipate his censures, and leave you with all your instructive simplicity to be mauled at discretion.'

' Yes,' cried I, ' but in order to avoid his indignation, and what I should fear more, that of the public, I would, in such a case, write with all the knowledge I was master of. As I am not possessed of much learning, at least I would not suppress what little I had ; nor would I appear more stupid than nature made me.' ' Here then,' cries the bookseller, ' we should have you entirely in our power ; unnatural,  
30 uneastern, quite out of character, erroneously sensible, would be the whole cry ; Sir, we should then hunt you down like a rat.' ' Head of my father ! ' said I, ' sure there are but two ways ; the door must either be shut, or it must be open. I must either be natural or unnatural.' ' Be what



you will, we shall criticize you,' returned the bookseller, 'and prove you a dunce in spite of your teeth. But, Sir, it is time that I should come to business. I have just now in the press a history of China; and if you will but put your name to it as the author, I shall repay the obligation with gratitude.' 'What, Sir,' replied I, 'put my name to a work which I have not written! Never, while I retain a proper respect for the public and myself.'—The bluntness of my reply quite abated the ardour of the bookseller's conversation; and, after about half an hour's disagreeable 10 reserve, he, with some ceremony, took his leave and withdrew. Adieu.

## LETTER LIV

### THE CHARACTER OF AN IMPORTANT TRIFLER

*From the Same*

THOUGH naturally pensive, yet I am fond of gay company, and take every opportunity of thus dismissing the mind from duty. From this motive, I am often found in the centre of a crowd; and wherever pleasure is to be sold am always a purchaser. In those places, without being remarked 20 by any, I join in whatever goes forward, work my passions into a similitude of frivolous earnestness, shout as they shout, and condemn as they happen to disapprove. A mind thus sunk for a while below its natural standard, is qualified for stronger flights, as those first retire who would spring forward with greater vigour.

Attracted by the serenity of the evening, my friend and I lately went to gaze upon the company in one of the public walks near the city. Here we sauntered together for some time, either praising the beauty of such as were handsome, 30 or the dresses of such as had nothing else to recommend them. We had gone thus deliberately forward for some



time, when, stopping on a sudden, my friend caught me by the elbow, and led me out of the public walk. I could perceive by the quickness of his pace, and by his frequently looking behind, that he was attempting to avoid somebody who followed: we now turned to the right, then to the left; as we went forward he still went faster, but in vain; the person whom he attempted to escape hunted us through every doubling, and gained upon us each moment; so that at last we fairly stood still, resolving to face what we  
10 could not avoid.

Our pursuer soon came up, and joined us with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. 'My dear Drybone,' cries he, shaking my friend's hand, 'where have you been hiding this half-a-century? Positively I had fancied you were gone down to cultivate matrimony and your estate in the country.' During the reply, I had an opportunity of surveying the appearance of our new companion: his hat was pinched up with peculiar smartness; his looks were pale, thin, and sharp; round his neck he wore a broad black  
20 ribbon, and in his bosom a buckle studded with glass; his coat was trimmed with tarnished twist; he wore by his side a sword with a black hilt, and his stockings of silk, though newly washed, were grown yellow by long service. I was so much engaged with the peculiarity of his dress, that I attended only to the latter part of my friend's reply, in which he complimented Mr. Tibbs on the taste of his clothes, and the bloom in his countenance: 'Psha, psha, Will,' cried the figure, 'no more of that if you love me: you know I hate flattery, on my soul I do; and yet, to be  
30 sure, an intimacy with the great will improve one's appearance, and a course of venison will fatten; and yet, faith, I despise the great as much as you do: but there are a great many damn'd honest fellows among them; and we must not quarrel with one half, because the other wants



breeding. If they were all such as my lord Mudler, one of the most good-natured creatures that ever squeezed a lemon, I should myself be among the number of their admirers. I was yesterday to dine at the Duchess of Piccadilly's. My lord was there. "Ned," says he to me, "Ned," says he, "I'll hold gold to silver I can tell you where you were poaching last night." "Poaching, my lord," says I; "faith you have missed already; for I staid at home, and let the girls poach for me." 'That's my way; I take a fine woman as some animals do their prey—stand still, and swoop, they fall 10 into my mouth.'

'Ah, Tibbs, thou art an happy fellow,' cried my companion, with looks of infinite pity; 'I hope your fortune is as much improved as your understanding in such company?' 'Improved,' replied the other; 'you shall know—but let it go no farther—a great secret—five hundred a-year to begin with. My lord's word of honour for it—his lordship took me down in his own chariot yesterday, and we had a *tête-à-tête* dinner in the country; where we talked of nothing else.' 'I fancy you forget, sir,' cried I, 'you told us but this 20 moment of your dining yesterday in town.' 'Did I say so?' replied he, coolly; 'to be sure if I said so, it was so—dined in town: egad, now I do remember, I did dine in town; but I dined in the country too; for you must know, my boys, I eat two dinners. By the bye, I am grown as nice as the devil in my eating. I'll tell you a pleasant affair about that: we were a select party of us to dine at Lady Grogram's, an affected piece, but let it go no farther; a secret: well, there happened to be no asafœtida in the sauce to a turkey, upon which, says I, "I'll hold a thousand guineas, 30 and say done first, that"—but dear Drybone, you are an honest creature, lend me half-a-crown for a minute or two, or so, just till—but harkee, ask me for it the next time we meet, or it may be twenty to one but I forget to pay you.'



When he left us, our conversation naturally turned upon so extraordinary a character. 'His very dress,' cries my friend, 'is not less extraordinary than his conduct. If you meet him this day you find him in rags, if the next, in embroidery. With those persons of distinction, of whom he talks so familiarly, he has scarce a coffee-house acquaintance. However, both for the interests of society, and perhaps for his own, Heaven has made him poor, and while all the world perceive his wants, he fancies them concealed from  
 10 every eye. An agreeable companion, because he understands flattery; and all must be pleased with the first part of his conversation, though all are sure of its ending with a demand on their purse. While his youth countenances the levity of his conduct, he may thus earn a precarious subsistence, but when age comes on, the gravity of which is incompatible with buffoonery, then will he find himself forsaken by all; condemned in the decline of life to hang upon some rich family whom he once despised, there to undergo all the ingenuity of studied contempt, to be employed only as a  
 20 spy upon the servants, or a bugbear to fright the children into obedience.' Adieu.

## LETTER LXVII

THE FOLLY OF ATTEMPTING TO LEARN WISDOM BY BEING  
RECLUSE

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo, by the way of Moscow*

BOOKS, my son, while they teach us to respect the interests of others, often make us unmindful of our own: while they instruct the youthful reader to grasp at social happiness, he grows miserable in detail, and, attentive to universal harmony,  
 30 often forgets that he himself has a part to sustain in the



concert. I dislike therefore the philosopher who describes the inconveniences of life in such pleasing colours that the pupil grows enamoured of distress, longs to try the charms of poverty, meets it without dread, nor fears its inconveniences till he severely feels them.

A youth who has thus spent his life among books, new to the world, and unacquainted with man, but by philosophic information, may be considered as a being, whose mind is filled with the vulgar errors of the wise ; utterly unqualified for a journey through life, yet confident of his own skill in 10 the direction, he sets out with confidence, blunders on with vanity, and finds himself at last undone.

He first has learned from books, and then lays it down as a maxim, that all mankind are virtuous or vicious in excess ; and he has been long taught to detest vice and love virtue : warm, therefore, in attachments, and steadfast in enmity, he treats every creature as a friend or foe ; expects from those he loves unerring integrity, and consigns his enemies to the reproach of wanting every virtue. On this principle he proceeds ; and here begin his disappointments. Upon a 20 closer inspection of human nature, he perceives, that he should have moderated his friendship, and softened his severity ; for he often finds the excellences of one part of mankind clouded with vice, and the faults of the other brightened with virtue ; he finds no character so sanctified that has not its failings, none so infamous but has somewhat to attract our esteem ; he beholds impiety in lawn, and fidelity in fetters.

He now, therefore, but too late, perceives that his regards should have been more cool, and his hatred less violent ; that the truly wise seldom court romantic friendships with the 30 good, and avoid, if possible, the resentment even of the wicked : every moment gives him fresh instances that the bonds of friendship are broken if drawn too closely, and that those whom he has treated with disrespect more than



retaliate the injury. At length, therefore, he is obliged to confess, that he has declared war upon the vicious half of mankind, without being able to form an alliance among the virtuous to espouse his quarrel.

Our book-taught philosopher, however, is now too far advanced to recede; and though poverty be the just consequence of the many enemies his conduct has created, yet he is resolved to meet it without shrinking. Philosophers have described poverty in most charming colours, and even his  
 10 vanity is touched in thinking that he shall show the world in himself one more example of patience, fortitude, and resignation. 'Come then, O poverty! for what is there in thee dreadful to the wise? Temperance, health, and frugality walk in thy train; cheerfulness and liberty are ever thy companions. Shall any be ashamed of thee, of whom Cincinnatus was not ashamed? The running brook, the herbs of the field, can amply satisfy nature; man wants but little, nor that little long. Come then, O poverty, while kings stand by, and gaze with admiration at the true  
 20 philosopher's resignation.'

The poor man now finds, that he can get no kings to look at him while he is eating; he finds, that in proportion as he grows poor, the world turns its back upon him, and gives him leave to act the philosopher in all the majesty of solitude. It might be agreeable enough to play the philosopher while we are conscious that mankind are spectators; but what signifies wearing the mask of sturdy contentment, and mounting the stage of restraint, when not one creature will assist at the exhibition? Thus is he forsaken of men, while  
 30 his fortitude wants the satisfaction even of self-applause; for either he does not feel his present calamities, and that is natural insensibility; or he disguises his feelings, and that is dissimulation.



Spleen now begins to take up the man : not distinguishing in his resentments, he regards all mankind with detestation, and commencing man-hater, seeks solitude to be at liberty to rail.

It has been said, that he who retires to solitude is either a beast or an angel. The censure is too severe, and the praise unmerited ; the discontented being, who retires from society, is generally some good-natured man, who has begun life without experience, and knew not how to gain it in his intercourse with mankind. Adieu. 10

## LETTER LXIX

### THE FEAR OF MAD DOGS RIDICULED

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, First President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin*

INDULGENT nature seems to have exempted this island from many of those epidemic evils which are so fatal in other parts of the world. A want of rain but for a few days beyond the expected season in China spreads famine, desolation and terror over the whole country : the winds that blow from the brown bosom of the western desert are impregnated with 20 death in every gale ; but in this fortunate land of Britain, the inhabitant courts health in every breeze, and the husbandman ever sows in joyful expectation.

But though the nation be exempt from real evils, think not, my friend, that it is more happy on this account than others. They are afflicted, it is true, with neither famine nor pestilence, but then there is a disorder peculiar to the country, which every season makes strange ravages among them ; it spreads with pestilential rapidity, and infects almost every rank of people ; what is still more strange, the 30



natives have no name for this peculiar malady, though well known to foreign physicians by the appellation of *epidemic terror*.

A season is never known to pass in which the people are not visited by this cruel calamity in one shape or another, seemingly different though ever the same : one year it issues from a baker's shop in the shape of a sixpenny loaf ; the next, it takes the appearance of a comet with a fiery tail ; a third, it threatens like a flat-bottomed boat ; and a fourth, 10 it carries consternation at the bite of a mad dog. The people, when once infected, lose their relish for happiness, saunter about with looks of despondence, ask after the calamities of the day, and receive no comfort but in heightening each other's distress. It is insignificant how remote or near, how weak or powerful the object of terror may be, when once they resolve to fright and be frightened ; the merest trifles sow consternation and dismay ! each proportions his fears, not to the object, but to the dread he discovers in the countenance of others ; for when once the fermentation 20 is begun, it goes on of itself, though the original cause be discontinued which first set it in motion.

A dread of mad dogs is the *epidemic terror* which now prevails ; and the whole nation is at present actually groaning under the malignity of its influence. The people sally from their houses with that circumspection which is prudent in such as expect a mad dog at every turning. The physician publishes his prescription, the beadle prepares his halter, and a few of unusual bravery arm themselves with boots and buff gloves, in order to face the enemy if he should offer to 30 attack them. In short, the whole people stand bravely upon their defence, and seem, by their present spirit, to show a resolution of not being tamely bit by mad dogs any longer.

Their manner of knowing whether a dog be mad or no



somewhat resembles the ancient European custom of trying witches. The old woman suspected was tied hand and foot, and thrown into the water. If she swam, then she was instantly carried off to be burnt for a witch; if she sunk, then indeed she was acquitted of the charge, but drowned in the experiment. In the same manner, a crowd gather round a dog suspected of madness, and they begin by teasing the devoted animal on every side; if he attempts to stand upon the defensive and bite, then he is unanimously found guilty, for 'a mad dog always snaps at everything'; if, on the 10 contrary, he strives to escape by running away, then he can expect no compassion, 'for mad dogs always run straight forward before them.'

It is pleasant enough for a neutral being like me, who have no share in these ideal calamities, to mark the stages of this national disease. The terror at first feebly enters with a disregarded story of a little dog, that had gone through a neighbouring village, that was thought to be mad by several that had seen him. The next account comes, that a mastiff ran through a certain town, and had bit five 20 geese, which immediately ran mad, foamed at the bill, and died in great agonies soon after. Then comes an affecting history of a little boy bit in the leg, and gone down to be dipt in the salt water. When the people have sufficiently shuddered at that, they are next congealed with a frightful account of a man who was said lately to have died from a bite he had received some years before. This relation only prepares the way for another still more hideous, as how the master of a family, with seven small children, were all bit by a mad lap-dog; and how the poor father first perceived the 30 infection, by calling for a draught of water, where he saw the lap-dog swimming in the cup.

When epidemic terror is thus once excited, every morning comes loaded with some new disaster: as in stories of ghosts,



each loves to hear the account, though it only serves to make him uneasy, so here each listens with eagerness, and adds to the tidings new circumstances of peculiar horror. A lady, for instance, in the country, of very weak nerves has been frightened by the barking of a dog; and this, alas! too frequently happens. The story soon is improved and spreads, that a mad dog had frightened a lady of distinction. These circumstances begin to grow terrible before they have reached the neighbouring village, and there the report is, that a lady  
10 of quality was bit by a mad mastiff. This account every moment gathers new strength, and grows more dismal as it approaches the capital; and by the time it has arrived in town the lady is described, with wild eyes, foaming mouth, running mad upon all-four, barking like a dog, biting her servants, and at last smothered between two beds by the advice of her doctors; while the mad mastiff is in the meantime ranging the whole country over, slavering at the mouth, and seeking whom he may devour.

My landlady, a good-natured woman, but a little credulous,  
20 waked me some mornings ago before the usual hour, with horror and astonishment in her looks; she desired me, if I had any regard for my safety, to keep within; for a few days ago so dismal an accident had happened, as to put all the world upon their guard. A mad dog down in the country, she assured me, had bit a farmer, who soon becoming mad, ran into his own yard and bit a fine brindled cow; the cow quickly became as mad as the man, began to foam at the mouth, and raising herself up, walked about on her hind legs, sometimes barking like a dog, and sometimes attempting  
30 to talk like the farmer. Upon examining the grounds of this story, I found my landlady had it from one neighbour, who had it from another neighbour, who heard it from very good authority.

Were most stories of this nature thoroughly examined, it



would be found that numbers of such as have been said to suffer were no way injured ; and that of those who have been actually bitten, not one in a hundred was bit by a mad dog. Such accounts in general, therefore, only serve to make the people miserable by false terrors, and sometimes fright the patient into actual frenzy, by creating those very symptoms they pretended to deplore.

But even allowing three or four to die in a season of this terrible death (and four is probably too large a concession), yet still it is not considered, how many are preserved in 10 their health and in their property by this devoted animal's services. The midnight robber is kept at a distance ; the insidious thief is often detected ; the healthful chase repairs many a worn constitution ; and the poor man finds in his dog a willing assistant, eager to lessen his toil, and content with the smallest retribution.

'A dog', says one of the English poets, 'is an honest creature, and I am a friend to dogs.' Of all the beasts that graze the lawn or hunt the forest, a dog is the only animal that, leaving his fellows, attempts to cultivate the 20 friendship of man ; to man he looks in all his necessities with a speaking eye for assistance ; exerts for him all the little service in his power with cheerfulness and pleasure ; for him bears famine and fatigue with patience and resignation ; no injuries can abate his fidelity, no distress induce him to forsake his benefactor ; studious to please, and fearing to offend, he is still an humble steadfast dependant, and in him alone fawning is not flattery. How unkind, then, to torture this faithful creature, who has left the forest to claim the protection of man ! how ungrateful a 30 return to the trusty animal for all his services. Adieu.



## LETTER LXXI

THE SHABBY BEAU, THE MAN IN BLACK, THE CHINESE  
PHILOSOPHER, ETC., AT VAUXHALL

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, First President of the Ceremonial  
Academy at Pekin, in China*

THE people of London are as fond of walking as our friends at Pekin of riding: one of the principal entertainments of the citizens here in summer is to repair about nightfall to a garden not far from town, where they walk about, 10 show their best clothes and best faces, and listen to a concert provided for the occasion.

I accepted an invitation a few evenings ago from my old friend, the man in black, to be one of a party that was to sup there; and at the appointed hour waited upon him at his lodgings. There I found the company assembled and expecting my arrival. Our party consisted of my friend in superlative finery, his stockings rolled, a black velvet waistcoat which was formerly new, and his grey wig combed down in imitation of hair. A pawnbroker's widow, of whom, by 20 the bye, my friend was a professed admirer, dressed out in green damask, with three gold rings on every finger. Mr. Tibbs, the second-rate beau I have formerly described, together with his lady in flimsy silk, dirty gauze instead of linen, and an hat as big as an umbrella.

Our first difficulty was in settling how we should set out. Mrs. Tibbs had a natural aversion to the water, and the widow being a little in flesh, as warmly protested



against walking ; a coach was therefore agreed upon ; which being too small to carry five, Mr. Tibbs consented to sit in his wife's lap.

In this manner, therefore, we set forward, being entertained by the way with the bodings of Mr. Tibbs, who assured us he did not expect to see a single creature for the evening above the degree of a cheesemonger ; that this was the last night of the Gardens, and that consequently we should be pestered with the nobility and gentry from Thames-street and Crooked-lane, with several other pathetic 10 ejaculations, probably inspired by the uneasiness of his situation.

The illuminations began before we arrived, and I must confess, that upon entering the Gardens, I found every sense overpaid with more than expected pleasure ; the lights everywhere glimmering through the scarcely-moving trees, the full-bodied concert bursting on the stillness of the night, the natural concert of the birds in the more retired part of the grove, vying with that which was formed by art ; the company gaily dressed, looking satisfaction, and 20 the tables spread with various delicacies, all conspired to fill my imagination with the visionary happiness of the Arabian lawgiver, and lifted me into an ecstasy of admiration.

I was going to second his remarks, when we were called to a consultation by Mr. Tibbs and the rest of the company, to know in what manner we were to lay out the evening to the greatest advantage. Mrs. Tibbs was for keeping the genteel walk of the garden, where, she observed, there was always the very best company ; the widow, on the contrary, 30 who came but once a season, was for securing a good standing-place to see the waterworks, which she assured us would begin in less than an hour at farthest : a dispute therefore began, and as it was managed between two of very



opposite characters, it threatened to grow more bitter at every reply. Mrs. Tibbs wondered how people could pretend to know the polite world, who had received all their rudiments of breeding behind a counter; to which the other replied, that though some people sat behind counters, yet they could sit at the head of their own tables too, and carve three good dishes of hot meat whenever they thought proper; which was more than some people could say for themselves, that hardly knew a rabbit and onions from a  
10 green goose and gooseberries.

It is hard to say where this might have ended, had not the husband, who probably knew the impetuosity of his wife's disposition, proposed to end the dispute, by adjourning to a box, and try if there was anything to be had for supper that was supportable. To this we all consented: but here a new distress arose; Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs would sit in none but a genteel box, a box where they might see and be seen; one, as they expressed it, in the very focus of public view; but such a box was not easy to be obtained, for though we  
20 were perfectly convinced of our own gentility and the gentility of our appearance, yet we found it a difficult matter to persuade the keepers of the boxes to be of our opinion; they chose to reserve genteel boxes, for what they judged more genteel company.

At last, however, we were fixed, though somewhat obscurely, and supplied with the usual entertainment of the place. The widow found the supper excellent, but Mrs. Tibbs thought everything detestable. 'Come, come, my dear,' cries the husband, by way of consolation, 'to be sure  
30 we can't find such dressing here as we have at lord Crump's, or lady Crimp's; but for Vauxhall dressing it is pretty good: it is not their victuals indeed I find fault with, but their wine; their wine,' cries he, drinking off a glass, 'indeed, is most abominable.'



By this last contradiction, the widow was fairly conquered in point of politeness. She perceived now, that she had no pretensions in the world to taste; her very senses were vulgar, since she had praised detestable custard, and smacked at wretched wine; she was therefore content to yield the victory, and for the rest of the night to listen and improve. It is true, she would now and then forget herself, and confess she was pleased, but they soon brought her back again to miserable refinement. She once praised the painting of the box in which we were sitting, but was soon 10 convinced that such paltry pieces ought rather to excite horror than satisfaction: she ventured again to commend one of the singers, but Mrs. Tibbs soon let her know, in the style of a connoisseur, that the singer in question had neither ear, voice, nor judgement.

Mr. Tibbs, now willing to prove that his wife's pretensions to music were just, entreated her to favour the company with a song; but to this she gave a positive denial—'for you know very well, my dear,' says she, 'that I am not in voice to-day, and when one's voice is not equal to one's judgement, 20 what signifies singing? besides, as there is no accompaniment, it would be but spoiling music.' All these excuses, however, were overruled by the rest of the company, who, though one would think they already had music enough, joined in the entreaty. But particularly the widow, now willing to convince the company of her breeding, pressed so warmly, that she seemed determined to take no refusal. At last then the lady complied, and after humming for some minutes, began with such a voice, and such affectation, as I could perceive gave but little satisfaction to any except her 30 husband. He sat with rapture in his eye, and beat time with his hand on the table.

You must observe, my friend, that it is the custom of



this country, when a lady or gentleman happens to sing, for the company to sit as mute and motionless as statues. Every feature, every limb, must seem to correspond in fixed attention; and while the song continues, they are to remain in a state of universal petrification. In this mortifying situation we had continued for some time, listening to the song, and looking with tranquillity; when the master of the box came to inform us, that the waterworks were going to begin. At this information I could instantly perceive the  
10 widow bounce from her seat; but correcting herself, she sat down again, repressed by motives of good breeding. Mrs. Tibbs, who had seen the waterworks an hundred times, resolving not to be interrupted, continued her song without any share of mercy, nor had the smallest pity on our impatience. The widow's face, I own, gave me high entertainment: in it I could plainly read the struggle she felt between good breeding and curiosity; she talked of the waterworks the whole evening before, and seemed to have come merely in order to see them; but then she could not  
20 bounce out in the very middle of a song, for that would be forfeiting all pretensions to high life, or high-lived company ever after. Mrs. Tibbs therefore kept on singing, and we continued to listen, till at last, when the song was just concluded, the waiter came to inform us, that the waterworks were over.

‘The waterworks over!’ cried the widow; ‘the waterworks over already! that’s impossible; they can’t be over so soon!’ ‘It is not my business,’ replied the fellow, ‘to contradict your ladyship; I’ll run again and see.’ He went,  
30 and soon returned with a confirmation of the dismal tidings. No ceremony could now bind my friend’s disappointed mistress, she testified her displeasure in the openest manner; in short, she now began to find fault in turn, and at last



insisted upon going home, just at the time that Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs assured the company, that the polite hours were going to begin, and that the ladies would instantaneously be entertained with the horns. Adieu.

## LETTER LXXIII

### LIFE ENDEARED BY AGE

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo, by the way of Moscow*

AGE, that lessens the enjoyment of life, increases our desire of living. Those dangers, which, in the vigour of youth, we had learned to despise, assume new terrors as we 10 grow old. Our caution increasing as our years increase, fear becomes at last the prevailing passion of the mind; and the small remainder of life is taken up in useless efforts to keep off our end, or provide for a continued existence.

Strange contradiction in our nature, and to which even the wise are liable! If I should judge of that part of life which lies before me, by that which I have already seen, the prospect is hideous. Experience tells me, that my past enjoyments have brought no real felicity; and sensation assures me, that those I have felt are stronger than those 20 which are yet to come. Yet experience and sensation in vain persuade; hope, more powerful than either, dresses out the distant prospect in fancied beauty, some happiness in long perspective still beckons me to pursue, and, like a losing gamester, every new disappointment increases my ardour to continue the game.

Whence, my friend, this increased love of life, which grows upon us with our years? whence comes it, that we thus



make greater efforts to preserve our existence, at a period when it becomes scarce worth the keeping? Is it that nature, attentive to the preservation of mankind, increases our wishes to live, while she lessens our enjoyments; and, as she robs the senses of every pleasure, equips imagination in the spoil? Life would be insupportable to an old man, who, loaded with infirmities, feared death no more than when in the vigour of manhood; the numberless calamities of decaying nature, and the consciousness of surviving every  
10 pleasure, would at once induce him, with his own hand, to terminate the scene of misery; but happily the contempt of death forsakes him, at a time when it could only be prejudicial; and life acquires an imaginary value, in proportion as its real value is no more.

Our attachment to every object around us increases, in general, from the length of our acquaintance with it. 'I would not choose', says a French philosopher, 'to see an old post pulled up with which I had been long acquainted.' A mind long habituated to a certain set of objects, insensibly  
20 becomes fond of seeing them; visits them from habit, and parts from them with reluctance: from hence proceeds the avarice of the old in every kind of possession. They love the world and all that it produces; they love life and all its advantages; not because it gives them pleasure, but because they have known it long.

Chinvang, the Chaste, ascending the throne of China, commanded that all who were unjustly detained in prison, during the preceding reigns, should be set free. Among the number who came to thank their deliverer on this  
30 occasion, there appeared a majestic old man, who, falling at the emperor's feet, addressed him as follows: 'Great father of China, behold a wretch now eighty-five years old, who was shut up in a dungeon, at the age of twenty-two. I



was imprisoned, though a stranger to crime, or without being even confronted by my accusers. I have now lived in solitude and in darkness for more than fifty years, and am grown familiar with distress. As yet, dazzled with the splendour of that sun to which you have restored me, I have been wandering the streets to find some friend that would assist, or relieve, or remember me; but my friends, my family, and relations are all dead, and I am forgotten. Permit me then, O Chinvang, to wear out the wretched remains of life in my former prison: the walls of my 10 dungeon are to me more pleasing than the most splendid palace; I have not long to live, and shall be unhappy except I spend the rest of my days where my youth was passed—in that prison from whence you were pleased to release me.'

The old man's passion for confinement is similar to that we all have for life. We are habituated to the prison, we look round with discontent, are displeased with the abode, and yet the length of our captivity only increases our fondness for the cell. The trees we have planted, the houses we have built, or the posterity we have begotten, all serve to bind us 20 closer to earth, and embitter our parting. Life suits the young like a new acquaintance: the companion, as yet unexhausted, is at once instructive and amusing; its company pleases; yet, for all this, it is but little regarded. To us, who are declined in years, life appears like an old friend; its jests have been anticipated in former conversation; it has no new story to make us smile, no new improvement with which to surprise: yet still we love it: destitute of every agreement still we love it; husband the wasting treasure with increased frugality, and feel all the poignancy of anguish 30 in the fatal separation.

Sir Philip Mordaunt was young, beautiful, sincere, brave, an Englishman. He had a complete fortune of his own,



and the love of the king his master, which was equivalent to riches. Life opened all her treasure before him, and promised a long succession of future happiness. He came, tasted of the entertainment, but was disgusted even in the beginning. He professed an aversion to living; was tired of walking round the same circle; had tried every enjoyment, and found them all grow weaker at every repetition. 'If life be in youth so displeasing,' cried he to himself, 'what will it appear when age comes on? if it be  
 10 at present indifferent, sure it will then be execrable.' This thought embittered every reflection; till at last, with all the serenity of perverted reason, he ended the debate with a pistol! Had this self-deluded man been apprised, that existence grows more desirable to us the longer we exist, he would have then faced old age without shrinking, he would have boldly dared to live, and served that society by his future assiduity, which he basely injured by his desertion. Adieu.

## LETTER LXXXIV

 20 THE ANECDOTES OF SEVERAL POETS, WHO LIVED AND DIED  
 IN CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRETCHEDNESS

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, First President of the Ceremonial  
 Academy at Peking, in China*

I FANCY the character of a poet is in every country the same: fond of enjoying the present, careless of the future; his conversation that of a man of sense, his actions those of a fool; of fortitude able to stand unmoved at the bursting of an earthquake, yet of sensibility to be affected by the breaking of a tea-cup;—such is his character, which,



considered in every light, is the very opposite of that which leads to riches.

The poets of the west are as remarkable for their indigence as their genius, and yet, among the numerous hospitals designed to relieve the poor, I have heard of but one erected for the benefit of decayed authors. This was founded by Pope Urban the Eighth, and called the retreat of the incurables, intimating, that it was equally impossible to reclaim the patients, who sued for reception, from poverty or from poetry. To be sincere, were I to send you an account 10 of the lives of the western poets, either ancient or modern, I fancy you would think me employed in collecting materials for a history of human wretchedness.

Homer is the first poet and beggar of note among the ancients: he was blind, and sang his ballads about the streets; but it is observed, that his mouth was more frequently filled with verses than with bread. Plautus the comic poet was better off; he had two trades, he was a poet for his diversion, and helped to turn a mill in order to gain a livelihood. Terence was a slave, and Boethius died in gaol. 20

Among the Italians, Paulo Borghese, almost as good a poet as Tasso, knew fourteen different trades, and yet died because he could get employment in none. Tasso himself, who had the most amiable character of all poets, has often been obliged to borrow a crown from some friend, in order to pay for a month's subsistence; he has left us a pretty sonnet, addressed to his cat, in which he begs the light of her eyes to write by, being too poor to afford himself a candle. But Bentivoglio, poor Bentivoglio! chiefly demands our pity. His comedies will last with the Italian language: he 30 dissipated a noble fortune in acts of charity and benevolence; but, falling into misery in his old age, was refused to be admitted into an hospital which he himself had erected.

In Spain, it is said, the great Cervantes died of hunger;



and it is certain, that the famous Camoëns ended his days in an hospital.

If we turn to France, we shall there find even stronger instances of the ingratitude of the public. Vaugelas, one of the politest writers, and one of the honestest men of his time, was surnamed the Owl, from his being obliged to keep within all day, and venture out only by night, through fear of his creditors. His last will is very remarkable. After having bequeathed all his worldly substance to the  
10 discharging his debts, he goes on thus: 'but as there still may remain some creditors unpaid, even after all that I have shall have been disposed of, in such a case, it is my last will, that my body should be sold to the surgeons to the best advantage, and that the purchase should go to the discharging those debts which I owe to society; so that if I could not, while living, at least when dead, I may be useful.'

Cassandre was one of the greatest geniuses of his time, yet all his merit could not procure him a bare subsistence.  
20 Being by degrees driven into an hatred of all mankind, from the little pity he found amongst them, he even ventured at last ungratefully to impute his calamities to Providence. In his last agonies, when the priest entreated him to rely on the justice of Heaven, and ask mercy from him that made him—'If God', replies he, 'has shown me no justice here, what reason have I to expect any from him hereafter?' But being answered, that a suspension of justice was no argument that should induce us to doubt of its reality; 'let me intreat you,' continued his confessor, 'by all that  
30 is dear, to be reconciled to God, your father, your maker, and friend.' 'No,' replied the exasperated wretch, 'you know the manner in which he left me to live; and,' pointing to the straw on which he was stretched, 'you see the manner in which he leaves me to die!'



But the sufferings of the poet in other countries is nothing when compared to his distresses here; the names of Spenser and Otway, Butler and Dryden, are every day mentioned as a national reproach: some of them lived in a state of precarious indigence, and others literally died of hunger.

At present, the few poets of England no longer depend on the great for subsistence; they have now no other patrons but the public, and the public collectively considered is a good and a generous master. It is, indeed, too frequently 10 mistaken as to the merits of every candidate for favour; but to make amends, it is never mistaken long. A performance indeed may be forced for a time into reputation, but, destitute of real merit, it soon sinks; time, the touchstone of what is truly valuable, will soon discover the fraud, and an author should never arrogate to himself any share of success, till his works have been read at least ten years with satisfaction.

A man of letters at present, whose works are valuable, is perfectly sensible of their value. Every polite member of 20 the community, by buying what he writes, contributes to reward him. The ridicule, therefore, of living in a garret might have been wit in the last age, but continues such no longer, because no longer true. A writer of real merit now may easily be rich, if his heart be set only on fortune: and for those who have no merit, it is but fit that such should remain in merited obscurity. He may now refuse an invitation to dinner, without fearing to incur his patron's displeasure, or to starve by remaining at home. He may now venture to appear in company with just such clothes 30 as other men generally wear, and talk even to princes with all the conscious superiority of wisdom. Though he cannot boast of fortune here, yet he can bravely assert the dignity of independence. Adieu.



## LETTER CXXIII

### THE CONCLUSION

*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, &c.*

AFTER a variety of disappointments, my wishes are at length fully satisfied. My son, so long expected, is arrived ; at once, by his presence, banishing my anxiety and opening a new scene of unexpected pleasure. His improvements in mind and person have far surpassed even the sanguine expectations of a father. I left him a boy, but he is  
10 returned a man : pleasing in his person, hardened by travel, and polished by adversity. His disappointment in love, however, had infused an air of melancholy into his conversation, which seemed at intervals to interrupt our mutual satisfaction. I expected that this could find a cure only from time ; but fortune, as if willing to load us with her favours, has in a moment repaid every uneasiness with rapture.

Two days after his arrival, the man in black, with his beautiful niece, came to congratulate us upon this pleasing  
20 occasion ; but, guess our surprise, when my friend's lovely kinswoman was found to be the very captive my son had rescued from Persia, and who had been wrecked on the Wolga, and was carried by the Russian peasants to the port of Archangel. Were I to hold the pen of a novelist, I might be prolix in describing their feelings at so unexpected an interview ; but you may conceive their joy without my assistance ; words were unable to express their transports ; then how can words describe it ?

When two young persons are sincerely enamoured of each  
30 other, nothing can give me such pleasure as seeing them married : whether I know the parties or not, I am happy at



thus binding one link more in the universal chain. Nature has, in some measure, formed me for a matchmaker, and given me a soul to sympathize with every mode of human felicity. I instantly, therefore, consulted the man in black, whether we might not crown their mutual wishes by marriage: his soul seems formed of similar materials with mine, he instantly gave his consent, and the next day was appointed for the solemnization of their nuptials.

All the acquaintances which I had made since my arrival were present at this gay solemnity. The little beau was 10 constituted master of the ceremonies, and his wife, Mrs. Tibbs, conducted the entertainment with proper decorum. The man in black, and the pawnbroker's widow, were very sprightly and tender upon this occasion. The widow was dressed up under the direction of Mrs. Tibbs; and as for her lover, his face was set off by the assistance of a pig-tail wig, which was lent by the little beau, to fit him for making love with proper formality. The whole company easily perceived, that it would be a double wedding before all was over; and, indeed, my friend and the widow seemed to make 20 no secret of their passion: he even called me aside, in order to know my candid opinion, whether I did not think him a little too old to be married. 'As for my own part,' continued he, 'I know I am going to play the fool, but all my friends will praise my wisdom, and produce me as the very pattern of discretion to others.'

At dinner, everything seemed to run on with good humour, harmony, and satisfaction. Every creature in company thought themselves pretty, and every jest was laughed at. The man in black sat next his mistress, helped her plate, 30 chimed her glass; and, jogging her knees and her elbow, he whispered something arch in her ear, on which she patted his cheek: never was antiquated passion so playful, so harmless, and amusing, as between this reverend couple.



The second course was now called for, and, among a variety of other dishes, a fine turkey was placed before the widow. The Europeans, you know, carve as they eat; my friend, therefore, begged his mistress to help him to a part of the turkey. The widow, pleased with an opportunity of showing her skill in carving (an art, upon which, it seems, she piqued herself) began to cut it up, by first taking off the leg. 'Madam,' cried my friend, 'if I might be permitted to advise, I would begin by cutting off the wing, 10 and then the leg will come off more easily.' 'Sir,' replies the widow, 'give me leave to understand cutting up a fowl; I always begin with the leg.' 'Yes, Madam,' replies the lover, 'but if the wing be the most convenient manner, I would begin with the wing.' 'Sir,' interrupts the lady, 'when you have fowls of your own, begin with the wing, if you please; but give me leave to take off the leg: I hope I am not to be taught at this time of day.' 'Madam,' interrupts he, 'we are never too old to be instructed.' 'Old, Sir!' interrupts the other, 'who is old, Sir? When I die of age, 20 I know of some that will quake for fear: if the leg does not come off, take the turkey to yourself.' 'Madam,' replied the man in black, 'I don't care a farthing, whether the leg or the wing comes off; if you are for the leg first, why you shall have the argument, even though it be as I say.' 'As for the matter of that,' cries the widow, 'I don't care a fig, whether you are for the leg off or on; and, friend, for the future keep your distance.' 'O,' replied the other, 'that is easily done; it is only removing to the other end of the table; and so, Madam, your most obedient humble servant.'

30 Thus was this courtship of an age destroyed in one moment; for this dialogue effectually broke off the match between this respectable couple, that had been just concluded. The smallest accidents disappoint the most important treaties; however, though it in some measure interrupted the general



satisfaction, it no ways lessened the happiness of the youthful couple ; and by the young lady's looks, I could perceive she was not entirely displeased with this interruption.

In a few hours, the whole transaction seemed entirely forgotten, and we have all since enjoyed those satisfactions which result from a consciousness of making each other happy. My son and his fair partner are fixed here for life ; the man in black has given them up a small estate in the country, which, added to what I was able to bestow, will be capable of supplying all the real, but not the fictitious 10 demands of happiness. As for myself, the world being but one city to me, I do not much care in which of the streets I happen to reside : I shall, therefore, spend the remainder of my days in examining the manners of different countries, and have prevailed upon the man in black to be my companion. 'They must often change,' says Confucius, 'who would be constant in happiness or wisdom.' Adieu.



# NOTES

## SCOTT'S LIFE OF GOLDSMITH

From the *Lives of the Novelists* (1821-4).

PAGE 1. 6. *the 29th November*: Prior showed from Charles Goldsmith's family Bible that Oliver was born on November 10, 1728. The date is given wrongly on the monument in Westminster Abbey.

12. *the Village Preacher*: see the *Deserted Village*, 137-92. The character was probably drawn much more from Goldsmith's brother Henry, who had recently died, than from his father.

13. *seven children*: this should be eight, of whom Oliver was the fifth.

15. *Roscommon*: in 1730 he was given the living of Kilkenny West in West Meath (not Roscommon), which he held till his death in 1747; after which his widow went to live at Ballymahon.

17. *nigra veste senescens*: 'growing old in widow's weeds.'

PAGE 2. 1. *the slave in the chariot*: Pliny says that the Emperor rode in a chariot with a slave behind him holding a golden crown; Tertullian, the early Christian Father, adds the statement that it was the slave's duty constantly to whisper to his master a reminder that he was a mortal. There is no earlier authority for this addition, but it has become a popular story.

2. *uncle by affinity*: i.e. by marriage; Contarine's wife and Oliver's mother were sisters.

6. *a sizar*: one who was educated in return for certain menial services rendered to the other undergraduates. The term is still in use at Cambridge, though a sizarship is now merely a small scholarship and entails no personal service.

34. *Brianton*: this should be 'Bryanton'; he was Goldsmith's cousin.

PAGE 3. 6. *a power*: this should be 'person'. Forster prints the letter.

22. *the narrative of George*: see the *Vicar of Wakefield*, xx.

PAGE 4. 14. '*Countries . . . wear very different appearances*', &c.: *An Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning*, xi.

19. *Haud inexpertus loquor*: 'I speak from experience.'

22. *in the year 1746*: a mistake for 1756; he had been away rather over two years.



PAGE 5. 3. *all a holiday at Peckham*: an obsolete colloquialism for having no appetite and so not caring to 'peck' ham.

27. *Essay on Polite Literature: An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, published in 1759.

32. '*I eagerly long*', &c.: in a letter to his brother-in-law Hodson, written in 1758.

PAGE 6. 10. *afterwards collected*: the *Essays*, twenty-three in number, were collected in 1765.

19. *the Lettres Persanes*: the Baron de Montesquieu, best known as the author of *L'Esprit des Lois* (1748), made his name by his *Persian Letters* (1721), a clever criticism of French society of his day. Goldsmith's '*Chinese Letters*' appeared singly twice a week in the *Public Ledger* of 1760.

PAGE 7. 17. *Newbery*: John Newbery, bookseller, of St. Paul's Churchyard, 'the philanthropic bookseller who has written so many little books for children' (*Vicar of Wakefield*, xviii).

31. *Johnson . . . is said to have contributed*: at Boswell's request Johnson in 1783 marked the lines he had furnished; there were only nine in all, viz. 420,

To stop too fearful, and too faint to go;  
and the last ten lines (429-38), with the exception of 435-6, which contain a mistake of fact.

PAGE 8. 7. *The Club*: founded, according to Boswell, in February 1764 by Sir Joshua Reynolds; Johnson and Goldsmith were original members.

25. *Retaliation*: written probably in February 1774, but not published till after his death.

27. *Burke, the dinner-bell of the House of Commons*: the name given to Edmund Burke, one of the greatest orators of the day, because his rising to speak was the signal for his unintelligent hearers, who dreaded long speeches, to go to dinner. The nickname was not given till long after *Retaliation*, but the hint is found there, see below, p. 91, ll. 35, 36 of the poem.

PAGE 9. 6. *an apologue*: a fable. That of the Little Fishes tells how they 'saw birds fly over their heads, and envying them petitioned Jupiter to be changed into birds'—see Boswell, *sub anno* 1773.

13. *Letters on the History of England*: the real title was *A History of England in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son* (1764); as the work was anonymous it was attributed to many different authors, among others to George, first Baron Lyttelton (1709-73), author of a *History of Henry II* and other works.

19. *Lee Lewes*: this is a strange slip on Scott's part; the anecdotes mentioned were communicated to the *European Magazine* in a series of papers by William Cooke, a young Irish law student



who had chambers near Goldsmith in the Temple; see *European Magazine*, xxiv (1793).

21. *Hume, Rapin, . . . Kennet*: David Hume's *History of England* (1754-61) was his chief authority, as far as Hume went: Paul de Rapin wrote *L'Histoire d'Angleterre* (1724), which was translated (1725-31) into English and was considered a great work; Bishop White Kennet's *Compleat History of England* appeared in 1706.

34. *Selections of English Poetry*: this was *Beauties of English Poetry Selected*, 1767, for which Griffin, the bookseller, gave him £50, not 'two hundred', as Scott says on the authority of Cooke. Goldsmith claimed that the making of such selections showed the 'art of profession' in authorship more than other compilations; for in such selections 'judgement is to be paid for'.

PAGE 10. 8. *the honours of the sock*: i.e. of the comic stage. *Soccus* (the sock) was the light shoe worn by the comic actor, as the buskin, or high boot, was by the actor in tragedy.

PAGE 11. 1. *this poem*: the *Deserted Village* (1770).

11. *Lee Lewes*: this should be William Cooke, as before.

20. *Dear lovely bowers, &c.*: ll. 5-14.

32. *a Shoemaker's Holiday*: in 1768 Goldsmith took a cottage eight miles down Edgware Road which had been built by a shoemaker, and which he accordingly termed the Shoemaker's Paradise. Following up the idea, he called his jaunts round the metropolis a shoemaker's holiday, probably without any reference to—possibly in ignorance of—Dekker's delightful comedy of that name.

PAGE 12. 6. *Highbury Barn*: about four miles from the Temple and due north of the City of London. *White Conduit House* was a tea-garden at Pentonville, much frequented by tradesmen on Sundays; the *Grecian* coffee-house was in Devereux Court, off Essex Street, Strand; the *Temple Exchange* was a coffee-house near Temple Bar.

10. *ordinary*: lunch or dinner at a fixed price.

24. *insisted upon returning*: the tale is told by Glover and by Cooke, but neither Forster nor Leslie Stephen (in *D. N. B.*) regards it as credible.

28. *Lisoy . . . claims the honour*: but see what Macaulay says below, p. 30, 28-31. Lisoy has, however, identified itself with the village by adopting the name Auburn.

PAGE 13. 5. *Abridgements of the History of Rome and England*: he brought out a two-volume *Roman History* in 1769, and a four-volume *History of England* in 1771; he abridged the former in 1772 and the latter in 1774.

11. *the resentment of the more zealous Whigs*: the *History* was only a compilation from Rapin, Carte, Hume, and Smollett, as Goldsmith admits in the preface; but the unfortunate author was assailed as



'the tool of the ministry', and as betraying his country 'for base & scandalous pay'.

13. *Langton*: Bennet Langton, a young friend of Johnson's and Goldsmith's and an original member of the Club; Johnson said of him, 'the earth does not bear a worthier man.'

16. *Squire Richard*: a very unpolished specimen of youthful squirearchy from Vanbrugh and Cibber's comedy, *The Provoked Husband*; among his fatuous remarks, however, there is no such statement as this.

22. *Lee Lewes*: here, for the first time in this *Life*, the name is right. Lee Lewes was a young actor, who made his first appearance in comedy on this occasion and achieved a great success; Goldsmith wrote an epilogue for Lewes's benefit in the same year. In 1805 the actor brought out four volumes of anecdotes about himself and the theatrical profession, in which, strange to say, no mention is made of Goldsmith. The extract which Scott gives as Lewes's is, as before, from Cooke's memoirs.

PAGE 14. 3. *Colman*: George Colman, the elder (1732-94), manager at Covent Garden theatre.

6. *the Life of Dr. Goldsmith*: i. e. the anonymous *Life* prefixed to the 1780 edition of Goldsmith's *Poems and Plays*.

29. *a History of the Earth, &c.*: in eight volumes, 1774.

PAGE 15. 7. *strangury*: a painful disease of the urinary organs.

11. *Dr. James's fever powders*: a remedy fashionable at the time and greatly believed in by Goldsmith. The proprietor of the powders was Francis Newbery, the bookseller, so it is not surprising that the nostrum was puffed in *Goody Two Shoes* and other works issued by him.

16-35. 'To the memory of Oliver Goldsmith, Poet, Naturalist, and Historian, who left untouched hardly any kind of writing and touched none without adorning it; alike in rousing laughter and tears he was a mighty though gentle master of the emotions; in genius exalted, living, and versatile; in language lofty, clear, and graceful. This monument has been erected by the love of his comrades, the loyalty of his friends, and the devotion of his readers. He was born in Ireland, in a place called Pallas, in the parish of Forney, and the county of Longford, on November 29, 1731 [see note to p. 1. 6]; he was educated in Dublin, and died in London, April 4, 1774.' The youthful student may note that the genitives in the first two lines depend on 'memoriam' in the tenth line, and that the subject of 'coluit' is the three following lines taken collectively. Conington pointed out long ago that 'ornavit' in classical Latin would be 'ornaret' ('in such a way that he did not adorn it').

PAGE 16. 22. *story of the White Mice*: in 1760, when Goldsmith was living in great poverty in Green Arbour Court, the impecunious Pilkington appealed to him for a loan of two guineas to buy a



cage for two white mice which he wished to offer to a certain duchess. Goldsmith had but half a guinea, which he immediately offered; and then at Pilkington's suggestion lent him his watch to pawn that he might make up the amount. It is perhaps needless to add that the half-guinea was never returned, and that Goldsmith had to redeem his watch for himself some months later.

27. *Master Jenkinson*: who cheated Dr. Primrose in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, xiv, by paying him for his horse with a worthless 'draft on neighbour Flamborough', and persuading the guileless Moses to exchange the family colt for 'a gross of green spectacles with silver rims and shagreen cases'.

PAGE 19. 5. *Bayes*: the dramatic author who appears in the *Rehearsal*, a burlesque comedy by the Duke of Buckingham and several others which appeared in 1672. The character of Bayes was intended for a skit on Dryden, to whom the name clung for the rest of his life.

### MACAULAY'S LIFE OF GOLDSMITH

Written in 1856 for the eighth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1853-60).

PAGE 20. 7. *diocesan school*: a school attached to a cathedral.  
8. *Elphin*: in Roscommon.

15. *the busy and splendid capital*: i.e. London.

PAGE 21. 2. *an old quartermaster*: this was Thomas Byrne, from whom perhaps the schoolmaster is drawn in the *Deserted Village*, 193-218.

5. *banshees*: fairies or spirits attached to families of pure Irish blood. They were in the habit of foretelling by their wailings the death of any member of the family.

*Rapparee chiefs*: the Rapparees were Irish freebooters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; they derived their name from the Irish *rapaire*, 'a short pike.'

6. *Baldearg O'Donnell* was hardly a Rapparee. He fought for James II, and after the capitulation of Limerick served under William III.

*galloping Hogan* was a Rapparee leader with a hundred followers, who made submission to the government in 1691, but was afterwards killed by his former associates. See the *Impartial History of the Wars in Ireland*, by Dean Story (1693), for which reference I am indebted to *Notes and Queries* for 1871. See also *The Rapparees*, a poem by the Canadian statesman, the Hon. T. D'A. M'Gee.

7. *Peterborough*: Charles Mordaunt, third Earl of Peterborough,



## 174 MACAULAY'S LIFE OF GOLDSMITH

was leader of the English forces in the War of the Spanish Succession (1705). Macaulay describes him as 'the most extraordinary character of that age' ('War of the Succession in Spain').

*Stanhope*: James, first Earl Stanhope, succeeded Peterborough in Spain.

8. *Monjuich*: the castle protecting Barcelona on the south. Peterborough took it by storm after a three weeks' siege.

*Brihuega*: is forty miles north-east of Madrid. Here the English under Stanhope, after fighting bravely, capitulated to the Duc de Vendôme.

14. *Carolan*: Turlogh Carolan, or O'Carolan, was an Irish wandering minstrel who died in 1738.

22. *the Glorious and Immortal Memory*: sc. of William III, a favourite toast of the Orangemen.

31. *Knowle*: Knole Park, a seat of Lord Sackville's, is near Sevenoaks. The portrait is by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

PAGE 22. 20. *on the window*: the pane is now preserved in the manuscript room at Trinity College, Dublin.

23. *the woolsack*: the seat of the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords.

PAGE 23. 21. *A generous kinsman*: see note to p. 2. 2.

PAGE 24. 14. *to assert in print that he was present*: see Goldsmith's *Memoirs of M. de Voltaire*: 'The person who writes this Memoir, who had the honour and the pleasure of being his [Voltaire's] acquaintance, remembers to have seen him in a select company of wits of both sexes at Paris, when the subject happened to turn upon English taste and learning.' Fontenelle and Diderot are mentioned as having been present.

François Marie Arouet, who took the name of Voltaire at the age of 24, was the greatest French writer of the eighteenth century; histories, plays, poems, novels, philosophical treatises, and attacks on ecclesiasticism and the current religion poured from his pen till his death in 1778 at the age of 84.

Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle was an equally prolific writer, who was born forty years before Voltaire and became president of the Académie des Sciences.

22. *a doctor's degree*: the authorities are divided as to whether he took his M.B. at Louvain or at Padua. There is no satisfactory evidence for either, but he was generally termed 'Dr. Goldsmith'.

26. *strolling player*: this is merely an inference from his 'Adventures of a Strolling Player', contributed to the *British Magazine*.

30. *Axe Yard*: Forster in his *Life* calls it Axe Lane; but I cannot identify either. Pepys in his youth lived in an Axe Yard off Whitehall, where the Foreign Office now stands.



*usher of a school*: this was kept by a dissenting minister, Dr. Milner, at Peckham.

33. *a bookseller's hack*: a needy author engaged by a bookseller—we should now say, publisher—to write to order. The name of his employer was Griffiths. The most 'galling' incident in his new post was the severe editing to which Griffiths and his wife subjected his articles.

PAGE 25. 12. *in a miserable court*: this was at 12 Green Arbour Court, near Ludgate Hill, where the S. E. & C. Railway now runs.

13. *Fleet Ditch*: originally the western boundary of the City of London. It was navigable as far as Holborn Bridge, but is now converted into a common sewer, running underneath Farringdon Street.

23. *once far-famed shop*: that of John Newbery, see note to p. 7. 17.

26. *Life of Beau Nash*: published in 1762, this is reprinted in the Globe edition of Goldsmith's *Works*.

PAGE 26. 24. *Johnson*: in 1760 Goldsmith had prospered enough to move to a more decent lodging in Wine Office Court, Fleet Street. Here in May 1761 Johnson, whom he had complimented in the fifth number of *The Bee* (see below, p. 99. 13) came to supper with him. Goldsmith thus made the great Doctor's acquaintance two years earlier than Boswell, a fact which the latter never forgave.

26. *Reynolds*: Sir Joshua Reynolds was now (1760) at the height of his fame. Eight years later, when the Royal Academy was founded, he became its first president. In 1784 he was appointed portrait-painter to the King, and in 1792 he died.

*Burke*: Edmund Burke came to London in 1748, and from that time till 1761 he maintained himself by literary work. After two years' absence in Ireland as private secretary to 'Single-speech' Hamilton, he returned to England, and devoted himself to politics, entering Parliament first in 1765, where he at once gained a high place among the Whigs.

30. *the nine original members*: besides Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, and Reynolds, mentioned here, the others were Beauclerk (see below, p. 32. 33), Nugent, Langton, Chamier, and Sir John Hawkins. They met once a week to sup at 7 o'clock at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street, Soho.

PAGE 27. 4. *his landlady*: this was not, of course, in the Inns of Court, but while he was living at Islington, whither he went for a couple of years in 1762. In 1764 he moved to the Temple, where he occupied three sets of chambers in succession, finally dying at 2 Brick Court.

28. *The opinion of the most skilful critics*: this remark was made by Johnson in the *Critical Review*.



30. *the Dunciad*: Pope brought out the fourth book of the *Dunciad* in 1741.

PAGE 28. 11. *the Vicar of Wakefield appeared*: it was published in 1766 by F. Newbery, the nephew of the 'philanthropic bookseller', who was presumably the person from whom Johnson had obtained the sixty pounds. Probably Newbery kept it by him for two years because he did not care to risk a loss till he was reassured by the success of the *Traveller*.

20. *the vicar and his monogamy*: 'I maintained, with Whiston, that it was unlawful for a priest of the Church of England, after the death of his first wife, to take a second,' chap. ii.

21. *cosmogony*: creation of the Universe, chap. xiv.

PAGE 29. 3. *at Covent Garden*: where George Colman, the Elder, was manager.

11. *False Delicacy*: a sentimental play by Hugh Kelly, of whom Johnson unkindly said that he had written more than he had read. The 'immense run' of the play is an example of Macaulay's love of exaggeration; the play was produced just six nights before Goldsmith's, but it had been an undoubted success, though Johnson pronounced it 'totally devoid of delicacy'.

20. *omitted after the first night*: when the play was revived five years later the omitted scene was restored 'by special request', which shows that the taste of the public had somewhat improved in the interval.

25. *with Bayes in the Rehearsal*: see note to p. 19. 5.

*the only use of a plan is to bring in fine things*: see the *Rehearsal*, Act III. Sc. i:

'Smith. . . . the Play does not go on.

Bayes. Play does not go on? I don't know what you mean: why, is not this part of the Play?

Smith. Yes, but the Plot stands still.

Bayes. Plot stands still! why, what a Devil is the Plot good for, but to bring in fine things?

Smith. O, I did not know that before.'

29. *that theory about wealth and luxury*: i.e. that the growth of luxurious habits among the well-to-do brings about the decay of the peasantry; see the *Deserted Village*, 51-2:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay,

a sentiment which has survived the censures of political economists with which Macaulay airily dismisses it.

33. *The finest poem in the Latin language*: Lucretius's poem *De Rerum Natura*, a poetical version of the teaching of Epicurus. Macaulay's judgement of the poem will be endorsed by many who can see nothing 'silly' or 'mean' in the doctrine.

PAGE 30. 19. *The village in its decay is an Irish village*: this is



not wholly true. Thanks to the Enclosure Acts, at least three million acres of common land in England were enclosed between 1709 and 1797, and nearly all the village land fell into the hands of one wealthy proprietor, the occupants, if they remained, staying on, not as small farmers, but as labourers.

PAGE 31. 8. *Kelly*: see note to p. 29. 11.

*Cumberland*: Richard Cumberland, see below, *Retaliation*, 61-78, and note.

27. *Naseby*, where the Parliamentarians under Fairfax decisively defeated the Royalists (1645), is in Northamptonshire.

29. *hoaxed*: by Gibbon. The famous historian does not appear to have been intimate with either Goldsmith or Johnson: Boswell frankly detested him, classing him with 'infidel wasps and venomous insects'—a judgement which (except for the 'infidelity') posterity is more likely to transfer to Boswell himself. Gibbon joined the Club in the year of Goldsmith's death.

31. *Montezuma*: the Aztec king of Mexico at the time of its conquest by Cortés, 1519-22.

PAGE 32. 1. '*If he can tell a horse from a cow*': from a foot-note in Boswell's *Life*, *sub anno* 1776.

5. *the sun is longer in the northern . . . signs*: from the spring to the autumn equinox is .5089 of the year; this amounts to rather more than  $3\frac{3}{4}$  days over the half year. Macaulay and his 'every schoolboy' may regard this as a matter of common knowledge; the ordinary mortal is probably as ignorant of it as Goldsmith was.

7. *Maupertuis*: Pierre Louis Maupertuis, a French mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher, was head of the expedition sent by Louis XV to Lapland in 1736 to measure a degree of longitude.

26. *bulks*: the framework projecting from the front of a shop; it was a usual place for slumber apparently in the eighteenth century. Cf. *Humphry Clinker* (1771), 'During the heats of summer he commonly took his repose upon a bulk.'

33. *Beauclerk*: Topham Beauclerk was the only son of Lord Sydney Beauclerk and an intimate friend of Dr. Johnson's, who was thirty years his senior. Many of his conversations with Johnson, in some of which he gallantly held his own, are recorded by Boswell.

*Garrick*: David Garrick, the famous actor, had been a pupil of Johnson's at Edial, near Lichfield, in 1736. The two came together to London the following year to seek, and find, their fortunes. He was elected to the Club in 1773, ten years after its foundation, when he was not merely the foremost English actor, but manager at Drury Lane. 'His conversation', according to Johnson, was 'gay and grotesque—a dish of all sorts, but all good things'—*Boswell*, *sub anno* 1776. On another occasion he said that Garrick was 'the first man in the world for sprightly conversation'. *Ibid.*, *sub anno* 1763.



## 178 MACAULAY'S LIFE OF GOLDSMITH

PAGE 33. 8. *Horace Walpole*: the third son of Sir Robert Walpole succeeded to the earldom of Orford at the age of 74. He was a voluminous author, but his reputation rests chiefly on his Letters, of which over three thousand have been published. His description of Goldsmith is from a foot-note in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, sub anno 1763, where Garrick's epigram is also given.

10. *Chamier*: Antony Chamier, an Under-Secretary of State, was an original member of the Club, see note to p. 26. 30. The term 'foolish chatterer' is Macaulay's own invention; what Chamier said was, 'Well, I do believe he wrote this poem himself: and, let me tell you, that is believing a great deal.' (*Boswell*, sub anno 1778.)

12. *Even Boswell could say*: *ibid.*, sub anno 1772.

PAGE 34. 26. *he said to Boswell*: this is not given in *Boswell*, but in Sir John Hawkins's *Life of Johnson*: 'He affected Johnson's style and manner of conversation, and when he had uttered, as he often would, a laboured sentence, so tumid as to be scarce intelligible, would ask if that was not truly Johnsonian; yet he loved not Johnson, but rather envied him for his parts; and once intreated a friend to desist from praising him, "for in doing so", said he, "you harrow up my very soul"' (p. 416 in the 1787 ed.).

27. *George Steevens*: he brought out a second edition of Johnson's *Shakespeare* in 1773, eight years after the first, making many important additions. In the following year he was elected to the Club on Johnson's recommendation. He was of a meddlesome and sarcastic temper, and, according to Beauclerk, deserved to be hanged for always speaking ill of his friends behind their backs. (*Boswell*, sub anno 1778.)

28. *Cumberland*: see below, *Retaliation*, 61-78.

PAGE 35. 18. *Lord Clive*: Robert Clive, the founder of the British Empire in India, returned to England in 1760 after the battle of Plassey with a fortune of £40,000 per annum. He was raised to the peerage two years later.

19. *Sir Lawrence Dundas* heaped up an immense fortune by acting as contractor to the English army during the early part of the Seven Years' War.

28. *a gambler*: the only authority for this, apart from his youthful follies, is Cradock's *Memoirs* (1828).

PAGE 36. 2. *a nervous fever*: a fever brought on by a nervous strain.

20. *the 3rd of April*: this should be the 4th.

22. *now forgotten*: Goldsmith's memory is, however, perpetuated by a tablet on the wall.

28. *a little poem*: *Retaliation*, see note to p. 8. 25, and below, p. 90.

PAGE 37. 12. *a cenotaph*: an empty tomb; as a matter of fact there is only a tablet in Westminster Abbey.



*Nollekens*: Joseph Nollekens, the son of a painter of Antwerp, was born in England in 1737, where he lived for the greater part of his life. He was elected to the Royal Academy in 1772.

13. *the inscription*: see above, p. 15. 15.

16. *A life of Goldsmith*: Johnson agreed to write a Life to be prefixed to an edition of Goldsmith's works, but disputes arose among the booksellers interested in the venture, and the project was abandoned. The *Lives of the Poets*, estimated by some as Johnson's greatest work (1779-81), consists of a series of biographies prefixed to the works of the various poets included in the series; these begin with Cowley, whom Johnson considered the earliest of the moderns, and end with Lyttelton, who died the year before Goldsmith.

29. *Mr. Prior, &c.*: James Prior's *Life of Goldsmith* appeared in 1837 in two volumes; John Forster's in 1848, and Washington Irving's, which added little or nothing, in 1849. Of these, Forster's has been far the most popular, about twelve editions having been published in England. Prior issued pamphlets in which he accused both the later writers of making unfair use of his own labours.

Washington Irving is best known by his *Sketch Book*, *Life of Mahomet*, and *Knickerbocker's History of New York*; Forster by his *Life of Dickens*.

### THACKERAY'S GOLDSMITH

From the *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century* (1853).

PAGE 38. 1. *Jeté sur cette boule, &c.*:

Mean, ugly, suffering, hurled  
 Into this weary world,  
 Half stifled 'mid the shoulders of the throng,  
 I raised a piteous cry;  
 'The good God made reply,  
 'Nay, sing, poor little one, sing all day long!'  
 To sing then—be it so—  
 Is my lot here below,  
 And gain perchance their love who hear my song.

13. *Béranger*, Pierre Jean de (1780-1857), a famous French lyric poet; the lines are from a poem of five stanzas called 'Ma Vocation'.

PAGE 39. 28. *Herder*, Johann Gottfried von (1744-1803), a German critic and poet. In 1776, ten years after the appearance of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, he went as court chaplain to Weimar, where Goethe also lived.

35. *Melchizedek*: see Hebrews vii. 1, 'This Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God.'



PAGE 40. 27. *our excellent Wakefield*: the practice of calling a clergyman by the name of his parish is, so far as I can learn, no more usual in Germany than in England.

PAGE 41. 1. *Doctor Primrose*: the Vicar was no doubt drawn in part from the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, but in many features he was a copy of the William Whiston so often mentioned in the novel, who was Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, translator of *Josephus*, and the firm upholder of some very heterodox theology (1667-1752).

19. *the Inny*: the river in Longford near Pallas.

PAGE 42. 14. *the kitchen turf*: turf or peat is the usual fuel in Ireland.

PAGE 43. 2. *a half-dozen of Irish dependants*: it was not only for purposes of spunging that Irishmen kept together. See the *Journal to Stella*, December 19, 1711, 'Patrick [the Dean's servant] is gone to the burial of an Irish footman. . . . The Irish servants always club to bury a countryman.'

22. *by his brother's lines*: see *The Deserted Village*, 141-2:

A man he was to all the country dear,  
And passing rich with forty pounds a year.

PAGE 44. 10. '*Mistake of a Night*': the sub-title of *She Stoops to Conquer*—which was based on this incident—was *The Mistakes of a Night*.

PAGE 45. 24. *buckeen*: a young Irishman of the inferior gentry.

25. *one patron*: he held a tutorship with one Mr. Flinn for a time.

PAGE 46. 10. *Farheim, Du Petit, and Duhamel du Monceau*: in the letter the last two are called 'Petit' and 'Du Hamel de Monceau'. Professor Phelps says the names should be Antoine Ferrein, Petit, and Duhamel-Dumonceau; the first was appointed Professor of Anatomy and Surgery at the Jardin des Plantes, Paris, in 1758, before which he held the Chair of Medicine at the Collège de France. Petit was, I suppose, Antoine Petit, who succeeded Ferrein at the Jardin des Plantes. Henri-Louis Duhamel du Monceau was a famous botanist, who wrote many useful works on agriculture.

27. *But me, &c.*: from *The Traveller*, 23-30; see below, p. 62.

PAGE 47. 20. *London court*: see note to p. 25. 12.

21. *that queer coal-scuttle*: 'While they were conversing . . . a poor ragged little girl of very decent behaviour entered, who, dropping a curtsy, said, "My mama sends her compliments and begs the favour of you to lend her a chamber-pot full of coals"' (from Bishop Percy's *Memoir*, quoted by Forster, *Life*, Book II, chap. vi).

28. *An "inspired idiot"*: see p. 33. 8, and note.

29. *the "gooseberry-fool"*: Goldsmith's term for himself in *Retaliation*, l. 16.



PAGE 48. 3. *the print of me*: this was by Marchi, and appeared in December 1770, the picture having been exhibited the previous April. Forster gives this incident in his *Life*, the old pupil being a Mr. Samuel Bishop.

PAGE 49. 2. *Beattie*: James Beattie (1735-1803), a Scottish poet, essayist, and philosophical writer; he was sometime Professor at Aberdeen.

4. *Kelly*: see above, p. 29. 11, and note.

10. *Colman's actors*: see above, p. 14. 3, and note.

PAGE 50. 19. *a letter*: printed in Forster's *Life*, Book II, chap. v; the books had been sent to Goldsmith to review.

22. '*He was wild, sir*': 'Dr. Goldsmith is one of the first men we now have as an author, and he is a very worthy man too. He has been loose in his principles, but he is coming right' (*Boswell*, *sub anno* 1763).

PAGE 51. 7. *who has touched on almost every subject, &c.*: see above, p. 15. 18.

20. '*Was ever poet*,' &c.: from a letter to Boswell, July 4, 1774.

31. *the Spectator appeared*: i.e. as a silent, reserved person (see *Spectator*, No. 12).

33. *the Lusiad*: the national epic of the Portuguese by Camoens (1572), which Goldsmith, despite his entire ignorance of the language, professed himself ready to translate. He was fortunately induced to transfer the work to Mickle, a Scot, who is best known in England as author of '*There's nae luck about the Hoose*'.

PAGE 52. 15. *the chambers in the Temple*: Goldsmith moved to 2 Brick Court, Temple, in the early part of 1768. He had before had chambers in Garden Court and in King's Bench Walk.

24. *in Boswell*: from a letter to Bennet Langton.

PAGE 53. 5. *Here, as I take, &c.*: from *The Deserted Village*, 77 sqq.

PAGE 54. 20. *Utopia*: 'ideal community', from Sir Thomas More's work of that name; the term literally means 'nowhere'.

*Yvetot*: '*Le Roi d'Yvetot*' was the title of a song by Béranger (for whom see above, note to p. 38. 13); it was written in 1813 to celebrate the blessings of a small dominion whose ruler aimed at happiness rather than conquest. Thackeray made a translation of the ballad, which is to be found in his works. Yvetot is a small town in the north of France, which, with its adjacent territory, had a king of its own during part of the Middle Ages.

PAGE 55. 1, 2. *my Lord Clare* and *my Lord Nugent* were the same person, viz. Mr. Robert Nugent, Comptroller of the Prince of Wales's Household; he was raised to the Irish peerage, as Viscount Clare in 1766, and Earl Nugent ten years later. He was Goldsmith's solitary patron, to whom *The Haunch of Venison* was addressed. He



was never a member of the Club, neither was he related to the Dr. Nugent who was an original member.

2. *my Lord Bishop*: several bishops were at one time or another members of the Club, among them being the Bishop Percy mentioned in the note to p. 47. 21.

14. *Goldy's play*: various names were suggested for *She Stoops to Conquer*, 'The Mistakes of a Night,' 'The Old House a New Inn,' and 'The Belle's Stratagem' being some of them. The name finally chosen was Goldsmith's own suggestion, possibly prompted, Mr. Doble suggests, by Dryden's line—'But kneels to conquer and but stoops to rise.'

PAGE 56. 2. *Ranelagh*: these famous gardens were at the east of Chelsea Hospital; the Rotunda was built in 1740 for the performance of masquerades and concerts. For a time Ranelagh quite eclipsed Vauxhall, but it gradually fell into disrepute, and was closed in 1805.

*the Pantheon*, in Oxford Street, was opened in 1771 as a place for dancing and theatricals: it was burnt down in 1792, and when rebuilt was again burnt down. The site is now occupied by Messrs. Gilbey, the wine merchants.

3. *Madame Cornelys*: a Venetian who was the manager of Carlisle House, Soho Square, where balls and concerts were held. After twelve very profitable years, during which her rooms were thronged by all the rank and fashion of the day, she was reduced to bankruptcy by the opening of the Pantheon.

4. *the Jessamy Bride*: the pet name Goldsmith gave to the younger of the Miss Hornecks. Jessamy is another form of Jasmine. She afterwards married Colonel Gwyn (see p. 53. 35). If Goldsmith ever was in love, it was with this charming girl; but, so far as we know, he never confessed it either to her or to anyone else.

6. *her beautiful sister*: Catherine, called by Goldsmith 'Little Comedy'.

8. *Gillray*, James (1757–1815), the famous caricaturist; about twelve or fifteen hundred works are ascribed to him, most of them reflecting on the king or the court.

21. *Northcote*, James, R.A. (1746–1831), a well-known portrait painter, and the author of a Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

23. *The younger Colman*: George, the son of George Colman mentioned above, p. 14. 3; like his father he was a dramatist, his best known play being *The Heir at Law*. The passage quoted is from his *Random Records*.

PAGE 57. 25. *plucked his gown, &c.*: from the *Deserted Village*, 184.

34. '*compassion for another's woe*': I cannot find this quotation, if it be one. Professor Regel suggests that Colman was thinking of the lines in the *Deserted Village* (371–2):



The good old sire the first prepar'd to go  
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe.

PAGE 59. 29. *running races with the constable*: the more usual phrase is 'outrunning the constable', i.e. getting into debt.

PAGE 60. 10. *Counsellor*: an old-fashioned term for a barrister.

PAGE 61. 14. *Swift and Pope, &c.*: these five, together with seven other writers, formed the subject of Thackeray's *Lectures on The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century*.

## THE TRAVELLER

PAGE 62. When the poem appeared in December 1764 Goldsmith prefixed a dedication to his elder brother Henry, in which he says, 'as a part of this poem was formerly written to you from Switzerland [i.e. in 1755], the whole can now with propriety be only inscribed to you.' He adds, 'What reception a poem may find which has neither abuse, party, nor blank verse to support it, I cannot tell, nor am I solicitous to know. My aims are right . . . I have endeavoured to show that there may be equal happiness in states that are differently governed from our own; that every state has a particular principle of happiness, and that this principle in each may be carried to a mischievous excess.'

The first edition was dated 1765, and was rapidly followed by three others; the sixth edition was five years later, and the ninth, the text of which is here given—for there were several alterations in the early editions—in 1774, the year of Goldsmith's death.

1. *slow*: 'Chamier once asked him [Goldsmith] what he meant by "slow", the last word in the first line of the *Traveller*; did he mean tardiness of locomotion? Goldsmith, who would say something without consideration, answered "Yes". I [Johnson] was sitting by, and said, "No, sir; you do not mean tardiness of locomotion; you mean that sluggishness of mind which comes upon a man in solitude"'.—Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, sub anno 1778.

3. *Carinthian*: Carinthia is a mountainous district of Austria, lying between Tyrol and Hungary. According to Cunningham the country in 1853 still maintained its character for inhospitality.

5. *Campania's plain*: Goldsmith probably meant the Roman *Campagna*, which is very unhealthy; 'the vast expanse is little better than an arid steppe', the malaria rendering it almost uninhabitable.

23. *me*: the object of 'leads' in line 29.

27. *the circle bounding earth and skies*: the horizon.

34. *an hundred realms*: a good instance of poetic hyperbole.

57. *sorrows fall*: i.e. fall upon me.



69. *at the line*: at the equator.

70. *palmy wine*: wine made from the sap of the palm-tree.

84. *Idra's cliffs*: there is no such place as Idra; but Mr. Lobban points out that in his *History of Animated Nature* Goldsmith speaks of the mines of 'Idra' in Carniola, a district just south of Carinthia; by this he clearly means Idria, noted for its quicksilver mines; so it is highly probable that he made the same mistake in this passage.

90. *either*: to speak of 'either' of five things is hardly grammatical.

98. *peculiar*: specially belonging to one; each good brought its own pain.

109. *between*: i. e. visible between the poet's seat and the woods.

117. *sweets*: sweet scents.

121. *gelid*: this ugly word, from the Latin *gelidus* 'cold, frosty', has not been traced earlier than 1606, or later than 1869.

122. *winnow*: to winnow (connected with 'wind') is properly to separate wheat from chaff by means of a current of air; it is used metaphorically by Dryden, 'winnow this thought', but Goldsmith seems arbitrarily to use it in the sense of 'waft'.

138. *teem'd with human form*: i. e. the quarrymen; the quarry was termed 'pregnant' as containing within it statues, pillars, &c., not yet born.

140. *Commerce on other shores, &c.*: Venice, Genoa, and the other cities of North Italy, which had easily taken the lead in trading with the East, were robbed of the greater part of their traffic by the discovery of the sea-route to India at the end of the fifteenth century; the almost simultaneous discovery of America also contributed largely to their downfall.

150. *paste-board triumph*: fancy-dress processions with stage 'properties'.

167. *mansions*: resting-places, temporary abodes. In its earlier sense the word had no implication of splendour or size.

184. *fits*: co-ordinate with 'sees' (179), he adapts himself to the soil by restricting his desires to what he can obtain.

186. *Breasts the keen air*: throws out his chest to meet it.

187. *trolls*: to troll is to angle with a running line; it is usually followed by 'for' (the fish); Goldsmith seems to have spoken of trolling the water on the analogy of fishing a stream.

190. *the struggling savage*: a wolf, or possibly a bear. In France wolves were to be found as late as 1875.

203. *shed to which his soul conforms*: i. e. both his dwelling and his desires are primitive.

243. *How often have I led, &c.*: an autobiographical touch, see above, p. 3. 26 and p. 24. 1.

253. *gestic lore*: knowledge of various steps in dancing. Scott in *Peveril of the Peak* (1823) calls dancing 'the gestic art'.

258. *honour forms the social temper*: either (1) honour prescribes



the feelings men have to one another, or (2) honour is the ingredient which tempers (or regulates) society. The difference is merely one of grammar, as the two interpretations amount to the same thing.

264. *an avarice of praise*: i. e. to covet praise eagerly. Avarice (covetousness) is not the same as niggardliness, though the two are often found together.

279. *still*: continually, a common seventeenth-century meaning.

286. *rampire*: an old variant of rampart, here used for dam, or dyke.

296. *reign*: realm.

306. *liberty . . . is barter'd*: Mitford says that in Holland 'children were sold by their parents for a certain number of years'.

311. *calmly bent*: stolidly crouching down.

313. *their Belgic sires*: Caesar says that of all the Gauls the Belgae (whose lands, however, extended no farther north than the Rhine) were the bravest.

319. *Arcadian*: Arcadia, a province in ancient Greece, has become a synonym for an ideally beautiful pastoral country.

320. *Hydaspes*: the ancient name of the Jehlam or Behut, a river of the Punjab where Alexander the Great turned back from his course of conquest. Horace gives it the epithet *fabulosus*, 'famed in story.'

324. *the master's*: i. e. the inhabitant's.

327. *port*: carriage, demeanour.

394. *When first ambition struck at regal power*: in the first edition this ran 'toil'd for foreign power', i. e. sought to increase its own wealth by dominating its neighbours. This fits in with the context, whereas the substituted line, which Mr. Dobell supposes to be a suggestion of Johnson's, has no connexion with what follows; nor is it easy to see what Goldsmith was thinking of, for autocracies have always been the objects of plots.

397-412. These lines are evidently the germ of *The Deserted Village*.

399. *haste*: *N. E. D.* gives no later instance of the transitive use of this verb in English (except with a reflexive pronoun) than Shakespeare.

411. *Oswego*: a river in the State of New York, flowing into Lake Ontario.

412. *Niagara*: there seems no authority for this remarkable pronunciation.

420. *To stop too fearful, &c.*: this line is Johnson's (see note to p. 7. 31); the antithesis is quite in his style, and Goldsmith's original line, 'And faintly, fainter, fainter seems to go,' certainly called for revision.

429-38. These lines also are Johnson's, except the last couplet but one.



436. *Luke's iron crown*: Goldsmith has confused two brothers, George and Luke Dosa, who raised a rebellion in 1513 in Hungary and proclaimed the former king; when the rebellion was quashed, a red-hot crown was placed on the rebel king's head. As Mr. Austin Dobson says, 'much ink has been shed over Goldsmith's lapse of "Luke" for George.'

*Damiens' bed of steel*: Robert François Damiens tried unsuccessfully to assassinate Louis XV in January 1757. He was fastened to an iron bed in order to be tortured, and was afterwards torn in pieces by four horses.

## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

PAGE 76. First published in 1770, six editions appearing in that year, and a seventh in 1772. The fourth edition gives the final text.

1. *Auburn*: Goldsmith undoubtedly had Lissoy in his mind in spite of Macaulay's contention (above, p. 30), though he may have idealized the picture of the village in its happy days. Lissoy has since changed its name to Auburn.

12, 13. *The decent church . . . The hawthorn bush*: both these have been recognized as landmarks of Lissoy.

*decent*: comely, pleasant-looking.

16. *remitting*: abating, slackening.

18. *Led up*: an archaic use of 'lead up', meaning 'lead off', 'start', 'begin'. Cf. *The Vicar of Wakefield*, ch. ix, 'Mr. Thornhill and my eldest daughter led up the ball.'

25. *simply*: in simple fashion.

27. *mistrustless*: unsuspecting. In this game A, who has not played it before, is told to imitate B, who has. He is then given a plate, face upwards, the bottom of which is covered with lampblack. B also takes a plate, the bottom of which is clean, and proceeds to draw lines upon his face with his finger, after rubbing it on the bottom of his plate. A, imitating him, soon, unknowingly, covers his face with smears of lampblack.

35. *lawn*: used in its original sense here, meaning an open space of grass-covered land, not necessarily cultivated or trimmed.

37. *the tyrant's hand*: the lord of the manor. By the Enclosure Acts, of which there were 700 between 1760 and 1774, the landlord was allowed on certain conditions to enclose the common land. Over three million acres were thus appropriated in the eighteenth century in England; and in Goldsmith's boyhood a General Napier had enclosed a large tract of land near Lissoy, ejecting the cottagers in order to improve his estate. This is stated by Dr. Streat, Henry Goldsmith's successor in the curacy of Kilkenny West.



57. *ere England's griefs began* : here Goldsmith is clearly thinking of Auburn as an English village.

74. *manners* : customs, habits, in the sense of the Latin *mores*.

78. *tangling* (active) is here substituted for 'tangled' (passive), a not uncommon idiom in verse.

103, 104. *For him . . . deep* : Goldsmith is evidently here thinking of those persons, a numerous class in his day, when investment was still almost unknown to the small capitalist, who retired to 'crown a youth of labour with an age of ease' on the earnings they had hoarded in strong boxes and the like during their working life. Nowadays most people invest their savings, and of these it would be quite untrue to say that 'for them no wretches', &c.

110. *resignation* : Sir Joshua Reynolds gave the name 'Resignation' to one of his pictures—the portrait of an old man ; and in dedicating the print to Goldsmith he says, 'This attempt to express a character in *The Deserted Village* is dedicated to Dr. Goldsmith by his sincere friend and admirer Joshua Reynolds.'

114. *yonder hill* : in R. H. Newell's edition of Goldsmith's *Poetical Works*, published in 1811, there is a plate depicting a small hill in front of Lissoy Parsonage ; and of this hill Goldsmith wrote (December 27, 1757), in a letter to his brother-in-law, 'If I climb Flampstead Hill, than where nature never exhibited a more magnificent prospect, I confess it fine ; but then I had rather be placed on the little mount before Lissoy gate, and there take in, to me, the most pleasing horizon in nature.' Lissoy Mount, in Newell's time, was already known as 'Goldsmith's Mount'.

115. *careless* : used here in the sense of the Latin *securus*, 'free from care.'

122. *vacant* here probably means free from troubles, and so joyous, and not witless or stupid. Cf. l. 257.

126. *fluctuate* : i. e. *waves* of sound are heard, now loud, now soft.

*gale* : not necessarily a strong wind, as in modern English.

136. *pensive* : the epithet is transferred, by a poetic licence, from 'historian', the word to which it properly belongs, to 'plain' ; the meaning being that the plain suggests thoughtfulness to the historian.

140. *The village preacher* : this delightful portrait is said by some to have been drawn from Charles Goldsmith, the poet's father ; by others from Henry, his brother : and the dedication to *The Traveller*, where Henry Goldsmith is described as 'a man who despising Fame and Fortune, has retired early to Happiness and Obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year', is adduced in support of the latter's claim. Possibly Goldsmith had both in mind when he wrote this passage.

*mansion* : i. e. simply 'a dwelling', without any idea of grandeur. The word is used in the same sense in ll. 195 and 238.

151. *The long-remembered beggar* : in many country districts, and



especially in Ireland, a beggar would formerly have his regular round, which he would traverse year after year.

155. *The broken soldier*: the Peace of Paris, between England, France, Spain, and Portugal, by which the Seven Years' War was brought to an end, was signed in 1763, seven years before the publication of *The Deserted Village*. The worn-out soldier, who had fought at Minden or Quebec, was thus a common feature in England at this time.

162. *pity*, the feeling for the poor, is well contrasted with *charity*, the duty of almsgiving.

164. *his failings*: these were, as appears from the previous lines, indiscriminate benevolence and the encouragement of vagrants.

176. *his*: sc. the dying man's, whose last words were those of praise to God.

179. *double sway*: because he not only preached but also practised.

184. *gown*: the clergy in Goldsmith's time wore gowns as their everyday attire, and not merely in church.

190. *midway leaves the storm*: i. e. the storm-clouds reach only half-way up the cliff, so that while the base is beaten by the storm the top is in the open sunshine. This phenomenon may often be observed in mountainous countries.

196. *The village master*: possibly drawn from Goldsmith's own early schoolmaster, Byrne; see above, p. 21. 2.

205, 206. *aught . . . fault*: for this rhyme cf. Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, ll. 422, 423:

Before his sacred name flies ev'ry fault,  
And each exalted stanza teems with thought!

Cf. also Goldsmith's own 'Edwin and Angelina', stanza xxxv:

But mine the sorrow, mine the fault,  
And well my life shall pay;  
I'll seek the solitude he sought,  
And stretch me where he lay.

and *Retaliation*, ll. 73-4:

Say, where has our poet this malady caught?  
Or, wherefore his characters thus without fault?

209. *Lands he could measure*: i. e. he knew the mysteries of mensuration.

*terms and tides presage*: terms = times for paying rent; tides = particular seasons of the year, e. g. Whitsuntide.

210. *gauge*: i. e. measure, used especially of measuring liquids in casks. Cf. the use of the word 'gauger' for an exciseman or Inland Revenue officer, whose business it was to measure the contents of beer or spirit casks for the purpose of levying duty on them.

227. *nicely-sanded floor*: brick floors, such as are common in



country inns, are more easily kept clean if they are covered with sand. The dirt is swept up together with the sand at the end of the day, and the sand scours the floor.

232. *The twelve good rules*: the so-called rules of King Charles the First, said to have been found in his study after his death. They were: '(1) Urge no healths; (2) Profane no divine ordinances; (3) Touch no state matters; (4) Reveal no secrets; (5) Pick no quarrels; (6) Make no comparisons; (7) Maintain no ill opinions; (8) Keep no bad company; (9) Encourage no vice; (10) Make no long meals; (11) Repeat no grievances; (12) Lay no wagers.' These rules, printed on a placard, and surmounted by a picture of the king's execution, were commonly hung on the wall, especially in taverns. Cf. below, p. 133. 12.

*the royal game of goose*: played with dice on a board, divided into compartments, with the figure of a goose at every fourth or fifth compartment; if the player landed on one of these, he might double the number of his throw. It is described in Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes*.

243. *the barber's tale*: before the growth of the newspaper press the village barber and the village blacksmith were, even more than they are now, the chief disseminators of the news of the day.

248. *mantling*: foaming.

284. *For*: in exchange for.

293. *solicitous to bless*: i.e. anxious to bestow her affections on some one.

305. *fenceless limits*: i.e. once fenceless; see above, note to l. 37.

316. *the pale artist*: here used in the widest sense for any one engaged in any manual art or craft.

318. *the black gibbet*: Goldsmith was one of the first to protest against the great severity of the penal laws of his day. Cf. *The Vicar of Wakefield*, ch. xxvii, and *A Citizen of the World*, Letter lxxx. As late as 1819 no fewer than 180 crimes were punishable with death in England. At Tyburn, the place of public execution in London (within a few yards of the spot where the Marble Arch now stands) there was for centuries a permanent gallows erected. This was replaced by a movable gallows in 1759; and the last execution took place there in 1783.

322. *torches*: there were no street lamps, even in London, until the reign of George III. Link-boys were hired to escort passengers at night.

326. *poor houseless shivering female*: Boswell tells how Johnson carried one such unfortunate woman to his lodging, tended her through her illness, and tried to find her a virtuous mode of living.

336. *wheel*: i.e. spinning-wheel.

344. *Altama*: the Altamaha, a river in Georgia, U.S.A.

345. *all that charm'd before*: sc. in the old country.

352. *gathers*: we should have expected 'scatters'. Goldsmith is



probably using the word here in the sense of 'to pluck', as though he had said 'gathers a harvest of death'.

355. *crouching tigers*: there are, of course, no tigers in America; Goldsmith is probably here referring to the puma or jaguar, which also belongs to the feline tribe.

358. The strength of the true tornado, which is a wind-storm of small extent but of enormous violence, is almost incredible to those who have not seen its effects. Whole houses are lifted from the ground, and trees are not only blown down but plucked from their roots and hurled for considerable distances through the air.

362. *thefts of harmless love*: i.e. stolen kisses.

372. *new-found worlds*: i.e. America.

416. *fare thee well*: 'The Haunch of Venison' and 'Retaliation' were, however, yet to come, together with several other less memorable poems.

418. *Torno*: a village on the western arm of Lake Como, in northern Italy, which gives its name to a neighbouring mountain, the Piz di Torno.

*Pambamarca*: a mountain in Ecuador, north-east of Quito. The name is not given in modern maps, but appears in Alcedo's *Geographical Dictionary* (1786-9).

419. *equinoctial*: equatorial. At the time of the equinox the sun is on the celestial equator; hence the term equinoctial is applied to this equator, and by extension to the terrestrial equator also.

427-30. Boswell states that these lines were added by Dr. Johnson: 'Dr. Johnson favoured me by marking the lines which he furnished to Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, which are only the *last four*.' The poem would perhaps end better without them.

## RETALIATION

PAGE 90. At a dinner of the members of the Club, from which Goldsmith was absent, it was proposed to write a number of epitaphs on him, making fun of his peculiarities; several were composed, but none have been preserved except Garrick's, two lines of which ran,

Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,  
Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll.

As a rejoinder Goldsmith wrote 'Retaliation'; and though he never lived to complete it, parts of it were handed round in manuscript, and all there is of it was published after Goldsmith's death and in the same month.

1. *Scarron*: Paul Scarron (1610-60), a French dramatist and burlesque poet. Goldsmith was engaged in translating his *Roman Comique* in the last year of his life.



5. *Our Dean*: Dr. Thomas Barnard (1726-1806), then Dean of Derry, afterwards Bishop, first of Killaloe, then of Limerick; see below, ll. 23-8.

6. *Our Burke*: see below, ll. 29-42.

7. *Our Will*: William Burke, see below, ll. 43-50.

8. *Dick*: Richard Burke, see below, ll. 51-60.

9. *Our Cumberland*; see below, ll. 61-78.

10. *Douglas*: see below, ll. 79-92.

11. *Garrick*: see below, ll. 93-124.

14. *Ridge*: a note to the second edition of the poem, published a few days after the first, describes him as 'Counsellor John Ridge, a gentleman belonging to the Irish bar'.

*Reynolds*: see below, ll. 137-46.

15. *Hickey*: see below, ll. 125-36.

29. *Edmund*: Edmund Burke (1729-97) had entered Parliament in 1766, two years after the formation of the Club, of which he was an original member. His treatise on *The Sublime and the Beautiful* appeared in 1756, and his *Thoughts on the Present Discontents* in 1770. He was an open-minded Whig, his chief aim being, till long after Goldsmith wrote of him, to check the ever-encroaching power of the Crown.

32. *to party gave up, &c.*: Burke was never a strong party man. What his friends objected to was his devotion to politics, curiously fancying that he would be serving mankind more by writing philosophy than by denouncing the oppression of Ireland and the taxation of the American colonies.

34. *Tommy Townshend*: M.P. for Whitchurch, afterwards first Viscount Sydney.

36. *while they thought of dining*: see above, p. 8. 27, and note.

42. *To eat mutton cold*: Burke had expensive tastes and was always in money difficulties. But to compare the dedication of his keen intellect to his country's service with the wastefulness entailed in cutting wood with a razor shows that Goldsmith held the—not wholly obsolete—opinion that government might well be left to second-rate persons.

43. *honest William*: 'Mr. William Burke, late secretary to General Conway, and member for Bedwin, Wiltshire' (note to the second edition). He was an old friend of Edmund Burke's, and is usually called his kinsman, though we have Edmund's authority for saying this was not so.

51. *honest Richard*: Edmund Burke's younger brother, then enjoying a year's leave from his post of Collector of Customs at Grenada.

61. *Cumberland*: Richard Cumberland (1732-1811), a miscellaneous writer, best known by his plays and his *Memoirs*; the former were chiefly comedies, hence Goldsmith's description of him as 'the Terence of England', but they were spoilt by their sentimentalism



and their over-insistent morality. His themes were hackneyed, but they all 'ended happily', the hearts which were broken in the earlier stages being, as Goldsmith says, carefully mended in the last act.

68. *tragedy giving a rout*: i. e. a combination of a stage tragedy and a fashionable 'at-home'.

79. *Douglas*: Dr. John Douglas (1721-1807), afterwards Bishop of Carlisle and later of Salisbury. He exposed two of his countrymen, Archibald Bower, who, being secretly a Jesuit, wrote a *History of the Popes* (1748-66), and William Lauder, who in 1750 brought out his *Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns in his Paradise Lost*. This latter work abounded in shameless forgeries, but it deceived Johnson, who was never friendly or even fair towards Milton, so that he wrote a preface for it. When Douglas detected the fraud, Johnson demanded a full confession from Lauder (*Boswell, s. a.* 1751), but we do not hear that he got it.

86. *Our Dodds*: Dr. William Dodd, a loose-living clergyman who afterwards in 1777 forged the name of Lord Chesterfield, a former pupil of his, to a bond for £4,200; for this he was hanged in spite of the efforts made by Johnson and others (*Boswell, s. a.* 1777) to procure his pardon.

*our Kenricks*: Dr. Willam Kenrick, a venomous Grub-street writer, had virulently attacked Johnson's Shakespeare in 1765. In January 1774 he delivered a series of lectures on 'The School of Shakespeare' at the Devil Tavern, near Temple Bar.

87. *Macpherson*: James Macpherson, whose production of *Ossian*, which he claimed to be a translation from early Gaelic poems, caused such excitement in literary circles in 1760. Modern critics are almost unanimously of Johnson's opinion that the work—whatever its merits—is a forgery of Macpherson's. In 1773 he published a translation of the *Iliad*, to which Johnson alludes in his famous letter to Macpherson written in 1775, 'Your abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable.'

93. *David Garrick*: the famous actor (1717-79); he came up from Lichfield at the age of twenty in company with Johnson, whose pupil he had been, and four years later he went on the stage, where he almost immediately became famous. Johnson described him as 'the first man in the world for sprightly conversation', and said that 'his death eclipsed the gaiety of nations'.

115. *Ye Kenricks, ye Kellys, and Woodfalls*: Kenrick and Woodfall came into contact with Garrick as theatrical critics, Hugh Kelly (see note to p. 29. 11) as a playwright. William Woodfall (d. 1803) was successively editor of the *London Packet* and the *Morning Chronicle*.

118. *be-Roscius'd*: Quintus Roscius, who died 62 B. C., was a friend of Cicero's and the most famous comic actor of Rome. The name has been applied to many famous actors, including Garrick.

124. *Beaumonts and Bens*: Francis Beaumont (1584-1616), who



collaborated with Fletcher, and Ben Jonson (1573 ?-1637), whose plays in their day were more popular than Shakespeare's.

125. *Hickey*: Joseph Hickey (d. 1794), described as 'honest Tom Hickey' in a note to the second edition, was 'a jovial, good-natured, over-blunt Irishman, the legal adviser of both Burke and Reynolds' (Mr. Austin Dobson). He accompanied Mrs. Horneck, her two pretty daughters, and Goldsmith to Paris in 1770.

136. *a special attorney*: he would now be called a solicitor; the epithet 'special' is to distinguish him from the Attorney-General.

137. *Reynolds*: Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92), see note to p. 26.26.

145. *Raphaels, Correggios*: Raphael (1483-1520) and Antonio Correggio (1594-1634), two of the greatest of Italian painters.

146. *his trumpet*: as the result of a cold caught in Rome in 1651, Reynolds became so deaf that he had to use an ear-trumpet.

## A REVERIE

Number 5 of *The Bee*, for Saturday, November 3, 1759.

PAGE 95. 17. *bridles up*: properly throwing up the head and drawing in the chin, as a horse does when reined in. The term is generally used as expressing mild indignation; here it is clearly gratified vanity.

PAGE 96. 19. *The vanity whim*: to term a vehicle a freak or caprice seems strange, but the word has no other possible meaning in this connexion.

23. *Berlin fashion*: a berlin (called after the city) was a four-wheeled covered carriage, with a hooded seat behind; it was introduced about 1670.

31. *Colley Cibber* (1671-1757), actor, dramatist, and poet-laureate, is on a very much lower level than the rest of the company. In the fourth book of the *Dunciad* (1742) Pope had made a sneering allusion to Cibber; the latter took up the cudgels and retorted so energetically in a published letter that Pope in a fury deposed Theobald as the hero of his poem and substituted Cibber in a new edition, a change which greatly marred the poem.

PAGE 97. 13. *the Bee*: Wilkie the publisher proposed to Goldsmith to bring out a weekly series of Essays, on the lines of the *Rambler*, to be sold for threepence. The first of the eight numbers which appeared, all of which are by Goldsmith, was issued on October 6, 1759.

26. *The next*: Dr. John Hill (d. 1775), the author of several works on plants. His 'Inspector' consisted in a number of articles in the *London Daily Advertiser*, beginning in March 1751.

PAGE 98. 19. *the brass*: the handle of the coach door.

24. *literary Proteus*: Proteus was the old man who tended



Neptune's herd of seals, and had the power of changing his shape at will.

25. *a rigadoon*: a lively and complicated dance, properly for two persons; the first instance of the word in *N. E. D.* is dated 1691.

27. *The person*: Arthur Murphy (1727-1805), a dramatist whose tragedy *The Orphan of China* was reviewed by Goldsmith in the *Critical Review* for May 1759. It was he who introduced Johnson to the Thrales.

PAGE 99. 13. *a very grave personage*: this was, as becomes obvious, Dr. Johnson. Goldsmith said of him once that 'he had nothing of the bear about him but its skin.'

25. *above one dictionary*: possibly this was the *Dictionary of the French Academy* (1694).

29. *the Rambler*: Johnson's bi-weekly essays on morals, manners, and literature appeared every Tuesday and Saturday from March 1750 to March 1752, and were sold for twopence.

32. *Clio*: the Muse of History, but Goldsmith probably means to suggest that Addison, who had died in 1719, would have preferred Johnson's essays to his own, for Addison used one of the four letters of the name Clio as the signature to each of his *Spectators*. Probably nobody to-day would prefer a *Rambler* to a *Spectator*.

PAGE 100. 1. *another*: David Hume (1711-76), who achieved fame by his philosophic essays, before he began his *History of England*. The first volume of this, beginning with the reign of James I. appeared in 1754; the second, continuing to the Revolution, appeared two years later. In subsequent volumes he gave the Tudors, and then the pre-Tudor times beginning with Julius Caesar. He revised the whole after the work was completed.

20. *a person*: Tobias Smollett (1721-71) brought out his *History of England* 1757-65, by which he added little to the reputation he had achieved by his novels *Roderick Random* (1748), and *Peregrine Pickle* (1751); though his best novel *Humphry Clinker* did not appear till 1771. There is no justice in the suggestion that Smollett was fond of money.

32. *Segrais*: Jean de Segrais (1624-1701), a French poet, who, however, hardly attained fame by his romance *Berenice*.

PAGE 101. 24. This *Reverie* never was continued.

## THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

### LETTER IV.

PAGE 104. 10. *Daily Gazettes*: the first London daily paper was the *Daily Courant*, which appeared on March 11, 1702, and ran for a dozen years without a rival, though many papers were issued three times a week.



## LETTER XIII.

PAGE 106. Addison also recounts a visit to Westminster Abbey in *Spectator*, No. 329; the lofty serenity of his paper contrasts well with the whimsicality and practical indignation of the Chinaman. In Goldsmith's paper we first encounter the Man in Black, who makes so frequent an appearance in the Letters. There can be little doubt in the mind of any one who reads the Letters that Goldsmith drew the salient parts of the character from himself.

PAGE 108. 26. *Drayton*: Michael Drayton (1563-1631), best known for his *Polyolbion*, a poetical description of Great Britain, packed with antiquarian lore, and for the stirring 'Ballad of Agincourt'.

PAGE 110. 19. *a lady who died*: this is Lady Elizabeth Russell, whose tomb is in the chapel of St. Edmund.

20. *a king with a golden head*: the oak figure of Henry V over his tomb in the chapel of St. Edward was originally plated with silver and is said to have had a silver head—now it has none; but Camden says this had disappeared before he wrote his *Britannica* in the time of Elizabeth.

22. *an old oak chair*: this was made in the time of Edward I to enclose the old stone called Jacob's Pillar, which was brought from Scotland.

PAGE 111. 2. *Kobi*, or Gobi, the great desert of Central Asia, is said by Marco Polo, who visited it about 1273, to be haunted by spirits who make strange noises and call travellers by their names.

6. *General Monk*: George Monck, or Monk (1608-70), who was largely instrumental in bringing about the Restoration, after which he was created Duke of Albemarle.

## LETTER XXI.

PAGE 112. 8. *eight or ten days*: Sir A. W. Ward in the article 'Drama' in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* merely says, 'it appears that the performance of some plays occupied more than a single day'.

PAGE 113. 31. *A woman who personated a queen*: it would be interesting, but so far I have failed, to find what was the play which Goldsmith holds up to ridicule in this letter.

PAGE 115. 3. *buskined*: see note to p. 10. 8.

PAGE 116. 23. *Abigail*: the traditional name for a handmaid, perhaps from the Abigail of 1 Samuel xxv, who several times speaks of herself to David as 'thine handmaid'.

25. *aposiopesis*: a sudden breaking off in the middle of a speech.



## LETTER XXVI.

PAGE 117. 21. *the man in black*: see introductory note to Letter XIII.

29. *an humorist*: in the obsolete sense of a whimsical person.

PAGE 119. 27. *wishfully*: i. e. with the wish to relieve him.

34. *a private ship of war*: a privateer. At the Conference of Paris in 1856 it was declared that 'privateering is and remains abolished'.

PAGE 120. 11. *matches*: before the invention of matches which ignited by friction it was usual to ignite thin chips of wood from a tinder-box.

## LETTER XXVII.

PAGE 121. Much of this history is clearly autobiography.

PAGE 122. 6. *the story of the ivy-tree*: probably this and the other anecdotes are as imaginary as 'the story of ould grouse in the gun-room', which Diggory entreated Squire Hardcastle not to tell at table, lest the servants should 'all burst out a-laughing'.

9. *Taffy*: a corruption of David, applied to Welshmen from their patron saint.

22. '*the human face divine*': Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iii. 44.

PAGE 123. 33. *a bonze*: a Buddhist priest.

PAGE 125. 22. *scrivener*: a scribe or copyist.

PAGE 126. 28. *mansion*: see note to the *Traveller*, 167.

## LETTER XXIX.

PAGE 128. 23. *upon computation*: Goldsmith has forgotten to exclude Sundays and other *dies non*.

PAGE 130. 18. *a rebus*: the representation of a word by a series of pictures representing the syllables.

22. *Mr. Tibbs*: this is clearly not the same person as Beau Tibbs, whose portrait Goldsmith afterwards drew in Letter LI, see below, p. 143.

## LETTER XXX.

PAGE 132. 26. *your Turnuses or Didos*: Turnus and Dido appear in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

PAGE 133. 3. *Calvert* and *Parson* were brewers; a *butt* is a large cask.

4. *drabs*: prostitutes.

11, 12. *goose . . . twelve rules*: see notes to the *Deserted Village*, 232.

13. *listing*: the selvage, or edge, of cloth.

14. *prince William*: William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland,



second son of George II. The portrait would be an outline filled in with black, of the kind afterwards called a silhouette.

17. *the frieze* : the vertical part of the mantelpiece, just over the fireplace.

18, 20. Goldsmith has copied these ideas in the *Deserted Village*, 235 and 230.

23. *Rabelais's bed-chamber* : I have failed to find any description of a bed-chamber either in the lives of Rabelais or in his works.

34. *Carissimo* : an Italian expression of applause.

PAGE 134. 8. *ex ungue Herculem* : [' You can judge the size of] Hercules by his nail.' The common proverb has *ex pede*, ' by his foot.'

22. *prebend* : a cathedral canon ; each has his own stall in the choir.

PAGE 135. 5. *the creolian* : a creole is a person of European blood who is born in the West Indies.

25. *touch for* : i.e. touch him for = borrow of him, a slang term still in use. A *bank-bill* is an old-fashioned term for a bank-note.

PAGE 136. 6. *catch-pole* : bailiff.

PAGE 137. 10. *to pull up the window* : coach windows were then made of wood.

#### LETTER LI.

PAGE 138. 6. *dish* : a cup (not a pot).

24. *a sessions paper* : a list of cases put down for trial at the sessions.

PAGE 139. 21. *patches* : these supposed ornaments of the face were sometimes worn by men, as they generally were by women of fashion.

21, 22. *the different manner of smiling* : manner is still used for a plural in the phrase ' all manner of ', but I can find no parallel to Goldsmith's phrase.

26. *the muster-master general* : as an official he was one who took the register of the personnel and equipment of every regiment ; here it is the name of a pamphlet giving the figures of the men present at naval or military reviews.

PAGE 140. 4. *a well-placed dash* : this is an evident hit at Sterne in whose *Tristram Shandy* (1759) the dashes are almost as numerous as the commas. Goldsmith perhaps intended a further fling at him in Letter LXXV for his occasional indecency.

8. *a garter* : this is certainly not the only article of ladies' under-clothing mentioned by Sterne.

PAGE 141. 6. *to disregard its laws* : it would be interesting to know what sort of book ' professes to disregard the laws of criticism '. Even mathematical tables—probably the least readable form of printed matter—cannot claim this high immunity.



## LETTER LIV.

PAGE 142. 25. *as those first retire, &c.*: a translation of the French saying 'reculer pour mieux sauter'.

PAGE 144. 3. *squeezed a lemon*: to make punch.

29. *asafoetida*: this evil-smelling substance was apparently then used as a flavouring. Cf. Letter XCVII, 'I am for sauce strong with asafoetida, or fuming with garlic.'

## LETTER LXVII.

PAGE 146. 27. *impiety in lawn*: a bishop's sleeves are made of lawn.

PAGE 147. 16. *Cincinnatus*: the frugal Roman of the fifth century B.C. who left the plough to become dictator, and having saved the state from the Aequi returned to his farm.

17. *man wants but little, &c.*: Goldsmith used this sentence five years later in 'Edwin and Angelina':

Man wants but little here below,  
Nor wants that little long.

But the sentence as it stands here was taken verbatim from Young's *Night Thoughts*, IV. 9 (1743).

PAGE 148. 5. *either a beast or an angel*: Aristotle (*Politics*, I. ii. 14) said, 'He who cannot form one of a community, or has no need so to do . . . is either a wild beast or a god.'

## LETTER LXIX.

In June 1765 Goldsmith reprinted this paper as No. 13 in the collected *Essays*, the only change being the omission of the sentence 'the winds . . . every gale' (ll. 28-30).

PAGE 149. 7. *a sixpenny loaf*: in 1688 a quartern loaf cost 3d., in 1735 5½d., in 1745 4¾d., in 1755 5d., and ten years later it had outstripped the scare and risen to 7d.

9. *a flat-bottomed boat*: the French, with whom we were then (1760) at war, were supposed to be planning an invasion of England.

PAGE 151. 26. *brindled*: or brinded, marked with streaks.

PAGE 152. 17. *says one of the English poets*: Mr. J. H. Lobban gives the reference to Otway's *Venice Preserved*, II. ii:

A friend to dogs, for they are honest creatures  
And ne'er betray their masters.

Goldsmith returned to the same theme in his 'Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog' in chapter xvii of the *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766).



## LETTER LXXI.

PAGE 153. 17. *his stockings rolled*: I take this to mean with the tops turned over and rolled up.

27. *in flesh*: stout.

PAGE 154. 8. *the Gardens*: Vauxhall Gardens, on the south side of the Thames just above Lambeth, are mentioned by Evelyn in his Diary for 1661, and were at their height from about 1730 for more than a century. They were finally closed in 1859.

10. *Thames-street and Crooked-lane*: two far from fashionable thoroughfares in the City of London.

32. *the waterworks*: Mr. Austin Dobson says that at this time they consisted of a mill-wheel and a cascade.

PAGE 155. 10. *a green goose*: the term green is still used of young birds.

31. *dressing*: i. e. cookery.

PAGE 156. 5. *smacked at*: i. e. smacked her lips at.

## LETTER LXXIII.

PAGE 159. 17. *says a French philosopher*: possibly this was Montaigne, whom Goldsmith praises elsewhere, but I have failed to find the passage.

PAGE 160. 28. *destitute of every agreement*: this must mean agreeable quality; Masson has substituted 'enjoyment' in his edition of Goldsmith, but I know not where he found authority for it.

32. *Sir Philip Mordaunt*: presumably a fictitious character.

## LETTER LXXXIV.

PAGE 162. 7. *Pope Urban the Eighth*: Matteo Barberini, who was Pope from 1623 to 1644. He was the Pope who compelled Galileo to recant.

17. *Plautus*: Titus Maccius Plautus, born about 254 B. C., having lost his money in trade, was driven, says Varro, to turn a hand-mill for a baker.

20. *Terence*: Publius Terentius Afer, born at Carthage in 195 B. C., was the slave of P. Terentius Lucanus, whose first two names he took, as was usual, on attaining his freedom.

*Boethius*: a Roman philosopher (475-524), an official at the court of Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, by whom he was put to death on a charge of treason. Boethius's most famous work was *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, parts of which were translated into English by King Alfred and by Chaucer.

21. *Paulo Borghese*: presumably he means Paulo Guidotto Borghese (1566-1626), a painter and sculptor who wrote some poems, among



them a *Gerusalemme* in rivalry of Tasso; none of his poems were printed, and no one but himself can have thought him the equal of Tasso.

22. *Tasso*: Torquato Tasso (1544-95), author of *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

29. *Bentivoglio*: the only one of the name whose comedies brought him any degree of fame was Ercole Bentivoglio (1506-73), and he was better known for his satires. Goldsmith has probably confused him with Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio (1579-1644), author of the *War in Flanders* (1630), which was translated into English in 1652.

34. *Cervantes*: Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616), author of the immortal *Don Quixote*. He lived and died poor, but, as he entered the Franciscan Order some three weeks before his death, it is unlikely that he died of hunger.

PAGE 163. 1. *Camoëns*: a famous Portuguese poet (1524-80), author of the *Lusiad*.

4. *Vaugelas*: Claude Favre de Vaugelas (1585-1650), a French grammarian, author of *Remarques sur la langue françoise*; he spent thirty years over a translation of Quintus Curtius.

18. *Cassandre*: François Cassandre (d. 1695), a French poet and classical scholar, whom Boileau took, under the name of Damon, for the philosopher hero of his first satire.

PAGE 164. 3. *Spenser and Otway, Butler and Dryden*: Edmund Spenser (1552-99) was always neglected and died poor; Ben Jonson even says that he 'died for lack of bread', but this must be an exaggeration, for he had powerful friends. Thomas Otway (1652-85), whose tragedy *Venice Preserved* is still regarded as a masterpiece, lived miserably and died in want. Samuel Butler (1612-80), author of *Hudibras*, gained nothing but fame by his work, and died in extreme poverty, leaving not enough to pay for his funeral. John Dryden (1631-1700), having become a Roman Catholic, was turned out of his offices of Laureate and Historiographer at the Revolution, and lived thereafter in very straitened circumstances.

### LETTER CXXIII.

PAGE 165. 11. *His disappointment*: the earlier chapters of this artless romance are in Letters 22, 35, 36, 59, 60, and 94. Goldsmith seems to have had no prejudice against the marriage of an English girl to a Chinaman.

PAGE 166. 31. *chimed her glass*: i. e. touched it with his own.



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